CHIMES OF CONSECRATION

and their Echoes

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CHIMES OF CONSECRATION

AND THEIR ECHOES

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BY THE

AUTHOR OF "I MUST KEEP THE CHIMES GOING,"
"COPSLEY ANNALS," "ALL THE DAY LONG,"
ETC. ETC.

"There are in this loud stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of th' everlasting chime;
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

SEELEY, JACKSON, AND HALLIDAY, FLEET STREET
LONDON. MDCCCLXXV.

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PREFACE.

THOUGH now for the first time, together with hitherto unpublished poems, collected into a separate volume, several of the following have already appeared among other surroundings and at different periods. This must be accepted as an excuse should occasional repetitions of thought and expression seem to demand an apology.

If on some ears, freshly attuned to the glad harmonies of a life fully consecrated, "Chimes among the Shadows" should, even as those of childhood, fall as memorial music only, they may not as such be without their sacredness of association.

And in their hearts for whom, because of Light and Love behind the cloud, the consecrated path is shaded by bereavement, loneliness, suffering, may "the everlasting chime" make heavenly melody, until, in its fullest sense, the Day dawn, and the shadows flee away.

October, 1874.

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CONTENTS.

I.

CHIMES OF CONSECRATION.

	PAGE
"The Consecration of his God is upon his Head"	3
White Robes	5
Stillness	7
In Waiting	10
He shall hide them Secretly	12
"Arise; shine; for thy light is come!"	14
"Trust in Him at all Times"	16
Longings	18
"There will I Meet with Thee"	20
"Praying without at the Time of Incense"	22
"That the King of Glory may come in"	24
"Casting all your care upon Him"	26
"Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest, and causest to approach unto Thee	27
A Little While	28
"If He had bid thee do some Great Thing"	30
Easter	32
Watch and Ward	33
One Thing Desired	34

PAGE
"Order Thou!" 35
Covered 36

II.

CHIMES AMONG THE SHADOWS.

The Churchyard in a Garden 39
Clinging 41
"Reckonings" 45
"Via Crucis, Via Lucis!" 46
"For Thy Name's sake, lead me and guide me" . . 48
The Faithless Ones 50
The Mourners 53
"The Lord watch between me and thee!" . . . 55
If we suffer with Him 56
"Have I been a Wilderness unto Israel?" . . . 57
"Sorrow not even as others which have no Hope" . 60
The "Fear not" of Christmas-tide 62
Communion of the Sick 63
"He Liveth who was Dead" 64
"Let us keep the Feast" 66
A Christmas Message 68
Weakness 73
By the Fire 75
The Old Year and the New 78
"The Watchman said, 'The Morning cometh'". . . 80

III.

CHIMES FROM HEATHER-BELLS; AND OTHERS.

The First Sacrament of the Reformation. . . . 85
The Cairn 92

PAGE

The Cauldron Linn 97
Hidden Ones 100
Farewell to the Ochills 102
First Snowdrops 103
Never Dim 105
How Great Works are Done 108
Gathered by the Way 111
Two Weeping Conquerors 113
September 114
The Yule-log 115
By and By 117
Until Evening 119
"At the Last" 121
New Year's Eve 122

IV.

CHIMES OF CHILD-LAND.

The Child Jesus 125
"Lord, what wilt Thou have Me to Do?" . . . 127
New Year's Morning 131
"You may Pick the Daisies" 135
The Bell-bird 138
Daisy Chains 140
The Easter Gospel 142
Harvest Hymn 146
The Vintage Gatherers 148
Our Burn 150
In the Swing 153
November 157
Christmas 159
Waiting for the Answer 161

I

CHIMES OF CONSECRATION

"And, therefore, be like the fresh river that keepeth its own fresh taste in the salt sea. This world is not worthy of your soul. Give it not a good-day when it cometh into competition with it. Be like one of another country. Home, and stay not! For the sun is fallen low and nigh the tops of the mountains, and the shadows are stretched out at great length. Linger not by the way, and the Lord Jesus be with you."—RUTHERFORD.

CHIMES OF CONSECRATION

"The Consecration of his God is upon his Head."

FULL CONSECRATION!—eye hath not beholden,
Ear hath not heard, nor heart of man conceiv'd
All the deep gladness in those words enfolden,
Their blessing who, not seeing, have believ'd.

FULL CONSECRATION!—heart and spirit yielded
In the calm rest of resurrection life;
Within the secret of God's presence shielded
From care in service, and from harm of strife.

FULL CONSECRATION!—confident surrender
Of starting wish, of plan unowned by Him;
Conscious encirclement by love too tender
With needless cloud the pilgrim path to dim.

Full Consecration!—every day revealing
Fresh visions of the land to be explor'd;
Once hidden melodies upon us stealing,
Clear whispers of the secret of the Lord.

Full Consecration!—whither, Lord, Thou goest,
We too would follow, listening for Thy call;
The true, glad watchword of our hearts Thou knowest,—
"*All, all for Christ, and Christ our All in all!*"

Full Consecration!—our own life's brief story
No wasted essence, no unwoven thread;
But, with the Church's commonwealth of glory,
Link'd to the glory of her risen Head.

Full Consecration!—is the first love over—
A tender mem'ry of a yearned-for past?
No; rather day by day our hearts discover
Depths deep'ning into perfect love at last.

Full Consecration!—binding to the altar
A free heart's sacrifice of life and will;
For pain, for chast'ning shall our spirits falter?
Take Thou Thy way, our God, and keep us still!

Full Consecration!—let us go forth bravely—
His cross-bearers, who lived for us, and died;
Taking grief calmly, making conquest gravely,
With the sweet quiet of the satisfied.

Thine, Lord, for ever! keep us, we implore Thee,
Yielded to Thee as risen from the dead;
Each in his priestly white to walk before Thee,
Thy consecration ever on his head!

White Robes.

"Let thy garments be always white."
"They shall walk with Me in white."

THEY walk with Him in white;
Knowing as they were known
Ere faith was lost in sight,
And life's sharp cross laid down.
Ye conquered in the fight,
Oh loved ones gone before;
And now ye walk in white
With Him for evermore.

We walk with Him in white:—
Purer than linen fair,
In God the Father's sight,
The righteousness we wear:
Fairer than driven snow,
Since washed in cleansing flood,
Their robes who here below
Now walk in white with God.

Here, on a sin-stained earth,
Now in a far-off land,
The sons of heavenly birth
As white-rob'd priests should stand:
Keeping their garments pure,
Shining with light serene;
Their watchword, "We endure
As seeing the Unseen!"

Oh pilgrim of the King,
To the trials of thy way,
The hush'd remembrance bring,
"I walk in white to-day."
And in gladness and in toil,
Uplift thy heart to Him,
Lest stain of earthly soil,
That blood-bought radiance dim.

And in times of sacred calm,
In hours of weary strife,
Chanting the pilgrim psalm
Of our new and ransomed life,
Still onward let us go
As children of the light,
That all around may know
We walk with Him in white.

Stillness.

(Ps. xxxvii. 7.)

Literally, in the Hebrew, "Be silent to God, and let Him mould thee."—LUTHER.

THY lesson art thou learning,
  Oh tried and weary soul?
His ways art thou discerning
  Who works to make thee whole?
In the haven of submission
  Art thou satisfied and still?
Art thou clinging to the Father
  'Neath the shadow of His will?
Oh, while His arms enfold thee,
  Think well "He loveth best!"
Be still, and He shall mould thee
  For His heritage of rest.

The vessel must be shapen
  For the joys of Paradise;
The soul must have her training
  For the service of the skies;
And if the great Refiner,
  In furnaces of pain,
Would do His work more truly
  Count all His dealings gain.

For He Himself hath told thee
Of tribulation here;
Be still, and let Him mould thee
For the changeless glory *there.*

From vintages of sorrow
Are deepest joys distill'd;
And the cup outstreteh'd for healing
Is oft at Marah fill'd;
God leads to joy thro' weeping,
To quietness thro' strife,
Thro' yielding unto conquest,
Thro' death to endless life:
Be still; He hath enroll'd thee
For the kingdom and the crown;—
Be silent; let Him mould thee
Who calleth Thee His own.

Such silence is communion,
Such stillness is a shrine;
The "fellowship of suff'ring"
An ordinance divine:
And the secrets of "abiding"
Most fully are declar'd
To those who in Gethsemane
The Master's watch have shar'd.
Then trust Him to uphold thee
'Mid the shadows and the gloom;
Be still, and He shall mould thee
For His presence and for Home.

For resurrection stillness
  There is resurrection pow'r,
And the prayer and praise of trusting
  May glorify each hour;
And common days are holy
  And years an Easter-tide
For those who with the Risen One
  In risen life abide.
Then let His true love fold thee,
  Keep silence at His word;
Be still, and He shall mould thee,
  Oh, rest thee in the Lord!

In Waiting.

I MUST watch betimes at His gate, ere the hush of the dawn be broken;
Ere the hurry of life begin, and the calm of the morn depart:
Some word for me alone in the quietness may be spoken
Which all thro' the live-long day I shall carry deep in my heart.

I know not what joy or care in its history may befal me;
I look in Thy face, my Lord, with eye and with heart attent:
Whether to still communion Thy voice of love shall call me,
Or whether to earnest toil:—I know not; yet wait content.

Some, with full heart of love, in waiting upon the Master,
Will go to prepare His way in the throng of the busy street;
And a few will bring, even now, the casket of alabaster,
Making His weary glad with the fragrance tender and sweet:

And to me a seed may be given for hidden and prayerful sowing;
Some lowly office of love discerned by His eye alone;
It may be only a word, while many are coming and going,
Which He will teach me to say who am whisp'ring, "Thy will be done!"

So while those to their high employ go forth in rejoiced procession,
Bright from the "With you alway" of the Master at the gate,
Quiet and strangely glad, with the peace of a felt possession,
I am willing to go or stay:—He knows that I stand and wait.

He shall hide them Secretly.

THERE is a Royal Pavilion
For the sons of God out-spread;
A canopy of covering
For bowed and weary head;
The everlasting Father
Unchangeable abides;
In the secret of His presence
His chosen ones He hides.

Oh, there are calm recesses
In that sanctuary fair;
And depths of hushed communion,
And quietudes of prayer:
There are times of sacred stillness,
Soft shadows of repose,
Tranquillities in sorrow
Which the Christ-taught mourner knows.

There are strains of hidden music,
Soft echoed songs of heaven;
Whispers of holy promise
To the belovéd given:
A quiet, still possession
Of such unchanging peace
That hushed are outer voices,
And doubt and waverings cease.

Oh, to be ever dwelling
  Within that calm serene!
Oh, to be ever resting
  In the shade of the Unseen!
Beneath that fair Pavilion
  Wherein Thy chosen hide
Through stormy day, in toilsome way,
  Dear Lord, let me abide!

"Arise; shine; for thy light is come!"

ARISE! shine! for thy light is come,
And the glory on thee is risen;
Arise, shine on a world of gloom,
Oh soul, which hast burst thy prison!
The glad new song thou must rise and sing
With the voice of a life's thanksgiving;
Thou art called to walk before the King,
In the land of the happy living.

Not with uncertain light and dim,
With pale and faint reflection,
Shine forth, oh ransomed one, for Him,
Thy Life and Resurrection;
E'en where of Christ, thy Lord most dear,
There is no remembrance spoken,
Light on thy brow serene and clear
His presence shall betoken.

Shine, that the world without may know
Of springs in secret welling,
Of a changeless peace for all below
In His secret Presence dwelling:
Thy life is hid with Christ in God,
Henceforth, in Him abiding,
Thy light must shine upon the road,
Homeward and heavenward guiding.

No more, in dark and cloudy day,
Let doubt and care enthral thee;
He goes before thee in the way,
Who deigned in love to call thee:
Thou hast left behind thee death's dark gloom
And the chains of the shadowy prison;
Arise! shine! for thy light is come,
In the life of a Saviour risen.

"Trust in Him at all Times."

THOU didst trust Him long ago,
Sin-burdened, weary, poor;
Doth He less pitying grow?
Doth He *now* close the door
Who, opening before,
Said, "Mine for evermore!"
Canst thou not trust Him *now?*

Thou didst cast on Him a load
Which He alone could bear;
And He, the Son of God,
Who shed for thee His blood,
Said "Cast on Me *thy care;*
For on my heart I wear
Thy name, whose guilt I bare;
My all with thee I share,
My peace on thee bestow."
Canst thou not trust Him *now?*

Thou hast trusted Him for *all*,
Placed all within His hand;
Is this thy grief too small
For Him to understand
Who marks the sparrow's fall?
Heir of the King of kings,
Heir of immortal things,
Would'st thou, on eagles' wings,
Mount nearer to the Throne?

Oh, take to Him alone
All that each hour brings:
Stoop not to murmurings!
Doth not thy Father know,
Who all thy past hath known
Shall care o'ercloud *thy* brow?
To roll away the stone
Canst thou not trust Him *now?*

Thou hast trusted Him for death,
Wilt thou not trust for *life?*
Believing what He saith—
"Not pain, nor sword, nor strife,
Not height nor depth beneath,
Distress that earth can know,
Or power of hell below,
Shall separate from Me
Him whom I ever see
Covered, O Son, in Thee!"
Canst thou not trust Him now?

Longings.

NOT fond desirings which may be translated
Into meet language, brother, for thy ear;
Not hopes deferred;—"Now, for this thing I waited,
And lo, the morning cometh! it is here!"

Not high ambition springing into action,
Clear-cut, like distant mountain-top, its aim;
Not the wild impulse towards a seen attraction,
The burning ardour for thy shrine, O Fame!

Know'st thou but these? Are these, immortal sleeper,
These the profoundest currents of thy soul?
Know'st thou no hidden longings—fuller, deeper,
Secret, unchallenged, scathless of control?

When late thine eyes beheld, as in a vision,
Yon western tapestry of purpling gold,
When on thine ear there fell the strains elysian,
Of harmonies thine heart cried forth to hold,

Then came there not to thee that nameless longing,
That deep, still need, thou vainly would'st express?
Unspoken prayers upon thy spirit thronging,
Which cries for help, which weeps for tenderness?

Come, O thou south wind! waken, O thou north!
Breathe o'er these strings which quiver into sound,—
The infinite within me yearning forth
Towards the Greater Infinite beyond!

Christ! by the memory of Thy one rejoicing
O'er mysteries to the children's hearts reveal'd,
Hear in the longing soul's unuttered voicing
Thy call, from whom no secret lies conceal'd.

Thou knowest! Leave, fond heart, to His true keeping
Thy silence and thy longings; yet abide
Till thou shalt waken from thy quiet sleeping
To hear Him whisper, "Be thou *satisfied!*"

"There will I Meet with Thee."

UP in the silent solitudes of prayer,
There where the soul holds communing with God,
Beyond the clouds of earthly grief and care,
The secret springs of life have ever flow'd.
Distant echoes from far-off regions,
Echoes of song from angel-legions
Welcome the thirsty spirit there;
And pardon, and promise, and peace are given,
Where the confines of earth touch the borders of Heaven.

They reach but seldom to those upper springs,
For whom earth barriers bar the mountain way;
Since to its kindred dust the spirit clings,
Loving the twilight rather than the day,
Till the angry clouds o'er life's pathway hover,
Till some short, sweet dream of bliss is over,
And the heart cries out for better things;
Then the voice of the Lord finds the sorrowing soul—
"Oh, come unto Me, I will make thee whole."

The presence-chamber of our God is found
By those who mount unto that tranquil height;
The place whereon they stand is holy ground,
And things of earth are seen in Heaven's true light;
And the soul clings fast to a strong salvation,
And to hope in Christ, and His consolation;
And whispers of promise breathe around;

While for help in the battle, and strength in the strife,
The waters are there of the well of life.

In ancient prophecy and holy psalm,
We trace the footsteps of the saints of old;
The love which lured them to that refuge calm
Abides unchanging, nor shall e'er grow cold:
And the sweet, pure well-springs are ever flowing,
And sun-lights of welcome for ever glowing,
And far-off visions of streets of gold:
When the Spirit has brought us to God in prayer,
We are near unto those who are waiting there.

"Praying without at the Time of Incense."

HIGH Priest of our profession,
Who art gone up on high,
Now from Thy royal session
In might and majesty,
Look down with love unceasing
On this Thy flock, we pray;
We are waiting for the blessing:
Oh, turn us not away!

Thou hast gone forth before us,
Hast pass'd within the vail;
Yet dost Thou still bend o'er us
When fears and foes assail:
Our wants, our sins confessing,
In silent prayer we bow;
We are waiting for the blessing;
Oh, shine upon us now!

Now, by the recollection
Of the cross on Calvary,
Now, by the resurrection
Which seal'd Thy victory;
Hear this our supplication,
The blessing be outpour'd;
Show forth Thy great salvation,
And breathe Thy Spirit, Lord!

Here, though our strains but falter,
We plead Thy sacrifice:
"The coal from off the altar"
Makes prayer as incense rise;
Thy pard'ning love possessing,
Our doubts and fears shall cease:
We are waiting for the blessing;
Oh, bid us go in peace!

"That the King of Glory may come in."

THOU did'st leave Thy throne and Thy Kingly crown,
When Thou camest to earth for me;
But in Bethlehem's home was there found no room
For Thy Holy Nativity:
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus!
There is room in my heart for Thee.

Heaven's arches rang when the angels sang,
Proclaiming Thy Royal degree;
But of lowly birth cam'st Thou, Lord, on earth,
And in great humility:
O, come to my heart, Lord Jesus!
There is room in my heart for Thee.

The foxes found rest, and the birds had their nest
In the shade of the cedar tree;
But Thy couch was the sod, O Thou Son of God,
In the deserts of Galilee:
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus!
There is room in my heart for Thee.

Thou camest, O Lord, with the living word,
That should set Thy people free;
But with mocking scorn and with crown of thorn
They bore Thee to Calvary:
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus!
Thy cross is my only plea.

When Heaven's arches shall ring, and her choirs shall sing
At Thy coming to victory,
Let Thy voice call me home, saying, "Yet there is room!
There is room at My side for thee:"
And my heart shall rejoice at the Bridegroom's voice,
When He cometh and calleth for me.

"Casting all your care upon Him."

WHEN from a world of tumult we retreat
To commune with the Lord in secret prayer,
We gladly bring our burdens to His feet
Who bids us cast on Him our every care ;
Yet is it seldom that we *leave* them there :
But when again the busy throng we meet,
We still are heavy laden,—still repeat
The tale of griefs which Jesus fain would bear.
Oh we should " roll our burdens on the Lord,"
Though faith be trembling, and our eyesight dim ;
For, did we realize His gracious word
Whose love is strong to bear His children's load,
We should go forth from communing with God
His peace our own—our care consigned to Him.

"Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest, and causest to approach unto Thee.

ALONE with Jesus I would be,
Withdrawn from earth and earthly things;
The brightness of His face to see
From whom each stream of blessing springs.

Alone with Jesus; to reveal
Each hidden thought, each secret care;
The sin I seek not to conceal,
The joys, the conflicts, He will share.

Alone, to tell Him all my need;
Alone, to whisper all my fear;
Alone, His promises to plead;
Alone, to feel that He is near.

Our earthly comforts pass away,
And gifts His bounty has bestow'd;
But this remains; and day by day
'Tis mine to be alone with God.

A Little While.

ONLY a little while,
And our longing hearts shall rise
To the light serene of the joys unseen
That await our waking eyes.

Only a little while,
And God shall the veil remove,
Which hides the face of our Lord of grace,
Whom, not having seen, we love.

Only a little while,
And His servants shall see the blaze
Of the hosts of God that encamp abroad,
To guard them in all their ways.

We have read how the seer of old
By that fiery guard was kept,
Which, calm and still, circled Dothan's hill,
Where Jehovah's prophet slept;

And we know that around our path
The watch is for ever set,
Though we hear not the tramp of the mighty camp
Where the legions of God are met;

Though we hear not the solemn charge
Concerning His own elect,
Of the Son of God who our path has trod,
And whom ever our hearts expect.

We see not, but yet believe—
  Believe in the life unseen—
In that second birth which is not of earth,
  In hearts where the Lord hath been ;—

Believe that the soul's still voice
  Is carried to Heaven in prayer;
That her need outpoured to a risen Lord,
  Is ever remembered there ;—

Believe that the fight is fought,
  And the banner of God unfurl'd
Where reigns in our time, amid guilt and crime,
  The prince of a fallen world.

Only a little while,
  And our faith, so flickering here,
Shall die in the light of a day-dawn bright,
  When the shadows shall disappear.

Then, knowing as we are known,
  The blessing may we receive
Which e'en now from Heav'n to them is given
  Who see not, but yet *believe.*

"If He had bid thee do some Great Thing."

HOW many, might they hear their Saviour's voice
Requiring for His own their lov'd and best,
Would hail such gracious summons, and rejoice
To yield their all at that dear Lord's behest.

And many, with those martyr'd saints of old
Who stood triumphant at the cross and stake,
As champions in the ranks of Christ enroll'd,
Would welcome death, were it for Jesu's sake.

"O Lord," they say, "our life, our spirit powers,
Our wealth, our all—yea, more than all—is Thine;
Take of Thine own! if still Thy love be ours,
All else to Thee we joyfully resign!"

Yet oft the same who at their Lord's command
Would tread the path of suffering undismayed,
Are sore perplexed, and sorrowfully stand,
If one fair blossom of life's pleasures fade.

Some word of light rebuke, some trivial loss
Will cloud their sunshine and obscure their light;
And heirs of God, and children of the cross,
Will lose the path of faith in that of sight.

Not by the death alone, but by the life
Of our Lord Christ; and by the wrong, the scorn,
The daily mead of sorrow and of strife,
For you, oh troubled ones, so meekly borne,

Learn in each lesser pain, in hourly cares
  Allowed by Him His chosen ones to prove,
To sing with hearts set free, since He prepares
  Thine every day, and bids thee trust His love.

Easter.

WHEN Easter comes
From hearts and homes
Let praises ring:
The strife is o'er,
Death rules no more,
The Lord is King!

On Christmas morn,
When Christ was born,
We sang for joy;
But now He reigns,
And higher strains
Our tongues employ.

In vernal leaf
The first-fruits' sheaf
Is waved on high:
The Harvest-Home
For those will come
In Christ who die.

O risen Lord,
O Light restor'd,
With quickening pow'rs
Arise and shine!
Our lives be Thine,
Since Thine is ours

Watch and Ward.

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep Thou the door of my lips."

"O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise."

SET a watch before my mouth,
Keep the door Thyself, O Lord:
In Thy presence, God of truth,
Hush'd be each tumultuous word!
All my help from Him I take
Who was silent for my sake.

Open Thou my lips for Thee!
Glad thanksgivings let me raise;
Thou hast lov'd, and set me free,
Let my mouth show forth Thy praise:
Ever of Thy grace to sing
Unto whom for all I cling.

One Thing Desired.

I KNOW not what the years may bring,
I leave their issues, Lord, to Thee:
Yet, pleading, ask for "this one thing,"—
"*That which I see not teach Thou me!*"

That which I see not;—all my need
Of pardon, grace, transforming power;
His love who deigns my cause to plead;
His care who guides me hour by hour.

That which I see not;—how to learn:—
In hidden teachings all around
How best Thy message to discern,
And of Thy voice to know the sound.

That which I see not;—how to cheer
The secret mourner by the way;
Christ-like to dry the sufferer's tear,
And lowly words for Thee to say.

That which I see not.—Oh! withhold
No teaching, whatsoe'er its cost!
Nor let me weep, as those of old,
In bitter grief for warnings lost.

Thus, day by day, and year by year,
Lord, to thy feet I bring my plea:
In pard'ning, answ'ring love draw near:
"*That which I see not teach Thou me!*"

"Order Thou!"

WILL the New Year bring greetings
Blithesome and gay?
Long looked-for meetings,
Joy's sunny day?
Father, we know not!
Coming joys show not:
Hear our entreatings—
Choose Thou the way!

Will the New Year bring weeping—
Sorrow's increase?
Will the New Year bring sleeping—
Quiet release?
Father most tender,
We can surrender
All to Thy keeping:—
Grant us Thy peace!

Covered.

O HAPPY heart that sings
Of everlasting things,
Cover'd 'neath shelt'ring wings,
For ever blest:
Changes of outward gloom,
Shadows which go and come,
Can never cloud that home
Of perfect rest.

Softly those wings enshroud
From discords harsh and loud
The heart 'mid thronging crowd
In quiet stayed:
A melody of calm,
Like chant of temple-psalm,
Falls, as with notes of balm,
Within that shade.

The little child that sings
"Keep me, O King of kings,
Beneath Almighty wings!"
Falls soft asleep:
How rough soe'er the way,
Thus, until close of day,
Within that shade, I pray,
My spirit keep!

II

CHIMES AMONG THE SHADOWS

"There was a certain king who had a pleasant grove; and that he might make it every way delightful to him, he caused some birds to be caught, and to be kept in cages till they learned sundry sweet and artificial tunes; and when they were perfect in their lessons, he let them abroad out of their cages into his grove, that while he was walking in this grove, he might hear them singing those pleasant tunes, and teaching them to other birds that were of a wilder note."

Rev. J. Alleine (1664), "*Address to Fellow-Prisoners for Christ's Sake.*"

The Churchyard in a Garden.

[On one of the southern slopes of the Ochills lies an old church, yard, for many generations disused, the church having fallen into decay, and its materials having been transferred. Now, surrounded by the garden of the proprietor, it is fenced in only by a few trees and the rise of the ground; and its silence is broken by the voices of children playing without.]

A LITTLE graveyard nestles on the hill,
Lost in a garden: once, with reverent words,
Men bore their dead to rest secure and still
Within this treasure-chamber of the Lord's.

Without, earth's thousand voices echo clear,
And gleeful chimes of children's laughter ring,
And circling seasons bring new joys: but here
Undying seed still waits a coming spring.

Without, the garden blossoms: while within,
Like a soft requiem, river waters sound:
One pitying rose-tree sever'd from her kin
Soft strews her petals on the wavy ground.

A little island in a tide of life
Which may not pass the bounds of that still shore;
A holy rood where shout of joy or strife
Awakes no echo, finds no entrance more.

And thus, methinks, concealed within each heart,
Save the glad heart of childhood, there is found
Fenced in, and from all outer life apart,
A silent, treasured spot of holy ground.

Lost hopes, surrendered joys, are hidden there,
Severed affections lie beneath that sod,
Buried with funeral rite of tears and prayer,
All secret save from Memory and God.

Yet blossoms life without: all is not dead:
On God's fair earth are there not flowers for all?
Some hopes and joys for each their fragrance shed,
To each for culture and thanksgiving call.

And not less tenderly fond Memory treads
The heart's still graveyard, known to her alone,
For that without fresh flowerets lift their heads,
And song resounds, and life's full tide flows on.

A churchyard in a garden! Long ago
A sepulchre within a garden lay;
Thence bring we immortelles which fadeless blow,
Undying hopes which cannot pass away,

And plant them trustfully on each sad shrine,
And o'er each grave of long-renounced affection;
Thence trace the rainbow arch of love divine
Linking for ever death and resurrection.

Clinging.

THE strong heart *clings*. Earth's weaker souls are found
Passionless leaning on near prop or stay
To which by tie of circumstance close bound
They bring their passive weight, and thro' their day
Smile with complacency on all things round.

But is that prop by sudden gust uptorn,
Or snapt in twain, such soul will helpless lie;
No mutual strength of intertwinement born
Put forth to bend in clasp-èd harmony
Where hurried gale or storm-wind rushes by.

Yet cease thy plaint, faint soul which makest moan,
Thy face upturn'd to the soft summer sky,
"I shall not rise, ne'er can I stand alone:
Alas! my pleasant things are past and gone:
Who so bereft, who so forlorn as I!"
Cease thy complaint! yon pitying passer-by
Shall pause, and, comprehending all thy cry,
Shall find for thee fresh stay:—thy tears shall dry;
And once again in sunshine thou shalt smile,
And with light heart the wanderer beguile.

But strong hearts plead to cling because of strength;
An outward tending need for something higher
Going forth in yearning tendrils, which at length
O'ertaking kindred clasp, with glad desire
Shall further still with growing might aspire.

Oh longing soul, with powerful impulse fraught,
Conscious of hidden sympathies unown'd,
Restless for soul-affinities uncrown'd,
Know'st thou a sep'rate life of wider thought,
Of strength unchallenged, of mind-powers unwrought,
Of stature loftier than theirs around,
By whom such loneliness least understood
Is lightly deem'd self-chosen solitude?
E'en tho' it be not thine, that fuller part,—
"He suffer'd thee to hunger" thine award—
It needs not that thy spirit-life be marr'd:
Echoless corridors within thy heart
May waken to a whispering divine
Ordaining for thine influence a range
Most Christ-like, since, with scanty interchange
Of thought responsive, it may yet be thine
Far-reaching sympathies to intertwine
Where all around, in weariness' dull shade,
And by the toil of common life o'erweigh'd,
The faint and spiritless would clasp thine aid;
Thyself by every need a debtor made.

Thus link'd with joys and sorrows, hour by hour,
And drawing upwards towards a Higher Love,
Heav'n's clearer light e'en to thyself shall prove
Thy loneliness a gift, thy strength a pow'r.

But if to thine aspirings it be giv'n
That thou with kindred mind should'st interlace,
And, in the fervour of that soul embrace,
Should'st learning to thank God, His workings trace,
And yearn with greater might towards Him and Heav'n;
Then, glad and triumphing in that soul-fusion,
Let strong-branch'd impulses, untutor'd once,
Girt into purpose by a full response,
In *service* prove their strength no vain illusion.
And more erect for upward clinging force,
Nobler for sympathy of intercourse,
With heart anew made bountiful to each,
See that from wealth of thy beatitude
Towards all around new, loving tendrils reach;
In joy, in grief, in care, in solitude,
Their claims discerning in thine own great good.

And falls the sev'ring stroke, as fall it must
Full often in a world where, intertwin'd,
True souls, for union infinite design'd,
Thro' broken types and shadows learn to trust
God's love and ways inscrutable combin'd:—
Falls there the sev'ring stroke? and art thou left
Bow'd, yet not prostrate, cherishing apart
The silence sensitive of the bereft?
Tremulous fibres, rooted in thine heart,
Quiv'ring and bare, from answ'ring fibres cleft?
Still, still thank God for that soul unison!
The wealth of thy possession is not flown,
Its glory ended, its high mission done:

Thy joy, tho', for a season, thine no longer,
Hath left thy heart enrich'd, thy spirit stronger;
Stronger for others, stronger yet to clasp
That which shall ne'er be sever'd from thy grasp.

For still thou mayest cling; no heart too lone
To call One Stay, One Sympathy its own;
Be strong in Him whose cross is at thy side;
Thither thy weight of lonely yearnings bring;
Thy longing arms of love around it fling;
Fraught with its living pow'r unmov'd abide:
Its sharper edges shall but nerve thy strength
To suffer and to do; until at length
Solemn and sweet shall sound the higher call;
Until thro' Him who lonely lived and died,
Thro' Him who rose for thee, the Justified,
Thro' Him who lives for thee, the Glorified,
Thou, loving, clinging, dying, shalt grasp all!

"Reckonings."

"LORD, how long these nights of weeping?"—
Thus the fainting spirit saith;
Weary heart, thy vigil keeping,
Hearken to the voice of Faith.

In the tongue of heav'n she speaketh,
And her tones are soft and clear,
"Who the Lord and Master seeketh,
Pain, endurance, must not fear;

"Jesus loving, Jesus living,
Calls the cross-bearers His friends;
Take with reverent thanksgiving
Tribulation which He sends.

"Hold it as a soul-consignment
Of inestimable worth;
As a battle-field assignment,
And in firm crusade go forth.

"Reckon it a trust endowment,
Use it earnestly for Heav'n;
Reckon it a love bestowment,
By a watchful Father giv'n.

"Prize His dealings humbly, duly,
In thy heart's true estimate;
Trust Him gladly, trust Him fully;
And to know His meaning,—*wait!*"

"Via Crucis, Via Lucis!" *

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and a up his cross daily, and follow me."

VIA Crucis, Via Lucis:
Unto Thee, the Crucified,
We our onward way confide;
Thou who slumberest not nor sleepest,
But Thy watch unchanging keepest,
Be our light at even-tide.

Via Crucis, Via Lucis:
Men of one high brotherhood,
Warriors, not 'gainst flesh and blood,
By that cross, of life the token,
By a covenant unbroken,
Fight the fight of Christ and God.

Via Crucis, Via Lucis:
Ye who, treading paths obscure,
Well and faithfully endure,
Hear His word who knows each trial,
Secret pain and self-denial,
Saying, "Blessed are the pure!"

Via Crucis, Via Lucis:
Not for us earth's dazzling glare
Who the Master's conflict share;
In the night of tribulation,
In the hour of strong temptation,
Ours the battle-hymn; our pray'r,

* Motto of the early Church.

Risen Lord, to Thee we cry!
Ambush'd foes about us lie,
Thou canst grant us victory:
Once in dark and awful hour
Thou didst quell the tempter's power;
We are weak, but Thou art nigh!

Via Crucis, Via Lucis:
Ours the pillar and the cloud,
Hidden calm 'mid tempests loud;
As the pilgrim pathway steepens
Pilgrim joy for ever deepens.
Wings of peace our souls enshroud.

Via Crucis, Via Lucis:
Through the night-watch chill and damp
Let the virgin trim her lamp,
Till the sun, the east adorning,
And the waking of the morning
Call us forth without the camp.

Via Crucis, Via Lucis:
Then the glory, now the fight—
Now earth's darkness, then heav'n's light:
Lord that we, through Thy great merit,
This salvation may inherit,
Keep us faithful in Thy sight.

"For Thy Name's sake, lead me and guide me."

THOU who wast before me
In the path I tread,
Thou who bendest o'er me,
Risen from the dead;
As a true believer
In the one sure Guide,
Keep me Thine for ever,
Clinging to Thy side!

If the way be lonely,
If the path be drear,
Let my spirit only
Find Thy presence near,
So shall light returning
Bid the darkness cease;
And the night of mourning
End in perfect peace.

When the flesh is failing,
When the heart is numb,
And the foe, assailing,
Seeks to overcome,
From Thy throne all glorious
Hear my suppliant breath,
Once Thyself victorious—
Faithful unto death.

When, like solemn dirges
From the moaning sea,
Sound the ocean surges
Of Eternity;
When the angel, beckoning,
Saith "The hour is come,
And the Master, reckoning,
Sends to call thee Home;"

When, in those far regions
Where around the throne
Shine the burning legions,
I must stand alone;
By Thy cross and passion
Borne to set me free,
Jesu—our Salvation—
Bid me dwell with Thee!

The Faithless Ones.

"Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, and the shadows of evening are stretched out."

"Why are ye fearful, oh ye of little faith?"

"At evening time it shall be light."

WOE unto us! for the day is going,
Clouds are gathering one by one,
Night-winds up from the river are blowing,
Shaking the shadow-curtains down.

Flowers lifting their faces sunward
Glow in the flush of the dying light:
We, like the river, are drifting onward,—
Onward, onward, into the night.

Our faces turned from the happy morning,
Our hearts restrained from the joys o'erflown;
The path wherein there is no returning
Into the darkness leads us on.

We remember the day-break golden,
Jubilant hours of childhood's story,
When from the future our eyes were holden,
Seeing only a haze of glory.

Hand in hand we listened and wondered—
Wondered that others should shrink in fear:
Little we dreamt of affections sundered,
We were together, *our* sky was clear.

We remember a shadow falling
Darkly, silently, over our track ;
One to another distantly calling,
Vainly we sought our belovèd back.

Vainly wept with a passionate yearning,
Wept that the dewy morn was past ;
Afterwards drooped in the noon-tide burning—
Drooped and mourned in the desert waste.

We remember the Miserere,
Upward borne from our fainting band ;
Then the rest when our hearts were weary,
Under the rock in the desert land.

We remember the deepened longing,
Visions fair of a far-off home ;
Oft, when doubts o'er the soul came thronging,
Angel-whispers of joys to come ;

Secret treasures of promise proven,
Hours lit up with a light sublime ;
Silver threads in life's tissue woven,
Golden grains in the sands of time.

Joy and Sorrow with smiles and showers,
Wove above us their rainbow arch ;
Hope and Fear in the waning hours
Whispered concerning the onward march :

Whispered low as the mists crept o'er us—
Earth's soft screen round a dying sun;
Whisper still as the path before us
Into the darkness leads us on.

Into the darkness: and then—ah! whither?
Whither? ask we with failing breath:
Our lost kindred return not hither;
All is still with the hush of death.

Into the darkness:—and who shall guide us?
"Father," we cry from the lonely path,
"Send thine Angel to stand beside us—
Father, our Father, now give us faith!"

In that hour of spirit travail
He, the Angel of Life, draws near;
All the past doth his clue unravel,
Making life's tangled mysteries clear.

And through the shadows a glory loometh:
Help us, Lord, for our sight grows dim!
"Hush!" He whispers: "the morning cometh—
And with the morning the angel's hymn."

The Mourners.

BENEATH this hill the quiet lake
Yon churchyard border gently laves;
I mark the silent mourners take
The path among the new-made graves,

And linger while the day wears on
As if unwilling to depart:
Oh friends, oh weary ones unknown,
I watch your grief with rev'rent heart.

Now fair thy face, thou poor wild flower
Fond clinging to yon bended bough;
How many in their parting hour
Have yearned that they might cling as thou;

Who wander here alone, alone;
And would that by some sudden change
These haunts all too familiar grown
Might wear an aspect new and strange,

Nor hold them fettered to the past
By memory's fondly woven chain,
Of other days too sweet to last,
And joys which blossom not again.

Soft broideries of leaf and fern
Are wrought upon the severed stem;
And parted streams meet beck and burn
From other hills, and sing with them;

But not for all does Time's kind art
O'ersmooth the sharpness of farewell;
Nor voice of song from every heart
May echoes of the past dispel.

Yet is it ours, 'mid thoughts that steal
Upon the soul with chill of death,
A sudden inward joy to feel:—
They still are one—the one in faith.

The waters from one parent source
This mountain-ridge parts east and west;
Yet in one ocean ends their course:
They in one love shall meet and rest,—

Shall meet and rest when life has fled,
Knowing what here they knew in part;—
A full communion perfected,
And changeless unison of heart.

The Lakes.

"The Lord watch between me and thee!"

ONCE more farewell!
We are still with the hush of our last greeting;
And our hearts with the parting throb are beating;
And but faintly falls the murmured hope of meeting:
For a little while farewell.

Once more farewell!
The fading form no longer we discover;
The days of our unparted life are over;
Their mem'ries as their shadows round us hover—
For a little while farewell.

Once more farewell!
The threads of our life-histories divided
To the keeping of our Father are confided:
He holds them by whose promise we are guided:
For a little while farewell.

Once more farewell!
Till we meet in the fulness of the blessing,
Till we meet the inheritance possessing,
Till we meet, all His faithfulness confessing,
For a little while farewell!

If we Suffer with Him.

LORD, make us strong to suffer! to endure
Beholding the Invisible by faith;
Knowing Thy presence real, Thy promise sure,
Faithful in life and faithful unto death;
Patience, long-suffering, joyfulness we claim,
Grasping the power of a Saviour's name.

And if the strokes for love Thou canst not spare
Must fall renewed on heart and frame opprest,
Teach us with faith serene Thy cross to bear,
And 'neath its yoke to trust and be at rest;
Thankful to share Thy baptism of pain,—
Who suffer with their Lord with Him shall reign.

"Have I been a Wilderness unto Israel?"

WHO, standing thoughtful on the height,
O'er his unfolded path looks back,
Retracing in celestial light
The mazy windings of his track,
May hear, 'neath requiem o'er the past
Chaunted in courts of memory,
A voice low hush'd as dying blast—
"Am I a wilderness to thee?

"When the fresh trust and hope of youth
Withered beneath the noon-day sky;
When rang the anguish'd 'What is truth?'
The heart's exceeding bitter cry;
When first, with doubt and care opprest,
Thy spirit knew not where to flee,
And wept that earth was not her rest,
Was I a wilderness to thee?

"When, fearful of an unknown God,
Thy soul, o'erwhelm'd with guilt and sin,
Lay crushed beneath the hidden load—
Darkness without—despair within;
Who came with healing to thy side,
And told of darker agony,
And bade thee know the Crucified?—
Was I a wilderness to thee?

"When, as in shining after rain,
Thy path was glad, serene thy sky,
And 'Shall I ever doubt again?'
Burst from the heart to Heav'n brought nigh;
When earth's fond arts and glittering snare
In vain allured a soul set free,
And love brought sweetness out of care,
Was I a wilderness to thee?

"When blind affection wildly strove
T' assuage the hunger of thy heart,
Which sighing for an earthly love,
Refused from that fond hope to part;
And when by disappointment's breath
The light was quenched of joys to be,
One love upheld thee strong as death—
Was I a wilderness to thee?

"In dark bereavement's lonely hour
I treasured up thy secret tears;
My presence quelled the tempter's power,
And gave thee victory for fears;
In joys and griefs a Father's hand
My Spirit taught thy heart to see,
And waymarks in a pilgrim land—
Was I a wilderness to thee?

"Yet would'st thou linger far from Home,
Lamenting sore the years gone by,
Who cryest, 'Lord, Thy kingdom come!'
And hast thy treasure stored on high.

Say, fear'st thou still the untried path?
O bring thy doubts, thy cares to Me!
Why fearful? thou of little faith:
Am I a wilderness to thee?"

Thus oft in retrospection's hour
The secret voice is inly heard
Whereby, with fresh almighty power,
To firmer trust the soul is stirr'd.
Nor die the echoes of that tone—
How dark soe'er life's future be,
Still softly pleading "Not alone!
Am I a wilderness to thee?"

And when within his Father's halls
The wayfarer, his conflict o'er,
Each link of life's brief past recalls,
Knowing what he believed before,
One voice with love's unchanging might
Awakes each chord of memory,
Whisp'ring, while faith is lost in sight,
"Was I a wilderness to thee?"

"Sorrow not even as others which have no hope."

TO the earth thy dust consigning,
To its God thy soul resigning,
We commit thee, unrepining,
To thy tranquil grave;
Yielding thee to His protection,
To His tenderer affection
Who,—our Life and Resurrection,—
Once in mercy gave.

Life's last lesson slowly learning,
To our darkened home returning,
We, with lonely hearts and yearning,
Take our toilsome way:
Thou the golden streets art treading
Where the Lamb His light is shedding,
His redeemed ones gently leading
To the founts of day.

As the flood-notes of the river
Swells their song of joy for ever
On his ear, the Lord and Giver
Of their cloudless life;
We, our joys oft mix'd with weeping,
Through the night our watch are keeping,
Lest the Master find us sleeping
In His hour of strife.

Lord, our suppliant cry receiving,
Bend o'er us, our need relieving,
Who, not seeing, yet believing,
Would with them be blest:
Now our toil and conflict sharing,
Now our sorrow-burden bearing,
Lift our hearts to joys preparing
In Thine endless rest.

The "Fear not" of Christmas-tide.

MOURNER, Christmas comes for thee;
Hear, with low and gentle tone,
One who whispers, "Look to Me!
Hope, for thou art not alone!"

Not for thee the merry throng,
Gladness making lonelier still;
Yet is thine the angels' song,
Echoed clear from Bethlehem's hill.

"Fear ye not!" from heav'n was spoken
Long ago, on Christmas Eve;
"Fear thou not!" is still the token
Which our waiting hearts receive.

"Unto you the Christ is given!"
Thus sang choirs full and clear;
Now a voice on Christmas Even
Softly echoes, "He is here!"

He knows all—thy Lord divine:
Mourner, though thine eye be dim,
Look to Christ;—His love is thine;
Take thy Christmas joy from Him.

Communion of the Sick.

"The shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

JESUS, I come to Thee!
Weary and weak, with contrite heart and lowly,
I come to Thee, O Lord; Thy name is holy:
For hope, for life, for all unto Thy cross I flee.

Oh, when the pilgrim path
Leads through the desert: when my heart is failing;
When doubts are strong, and enemies assailing,
Be near, Thou Son of God, do Thou increase my faith!

Low at thy feet I fall;
The care, the sins, the wanderings of the past—
My shameful burden upon Thee I cast;
Jesus, Thou dying Lamb, Thy blood atones for all.

For all, for all, my God!
The "It is finish'd" upon Calvary spoken,
Thy blood out-pour'd, Thy sacred body broken,
These tell of peace and pardon—Thou hast borne my load.

Here let my soul abide!
Here at Thy cross take up her lowly station;
Here in Thy death discern her full salvation;
Rock in a weary land, within Thy cleft I hide.

"He Liveth who was Dead."

THAT day had mournful ending
When evening shades descending
Soft veil'd the mourners bending
Around the Crucified:
His sacred body broken,
The "It is finish'd" spoken,
Of His true love the token,
Who lov'd, and liv'd, and died.

Sad parting gifts they made Him,
In linen fair array'd Him,
And tenderly they laid Him
Within His lowly bed:
But oh! how glad the meeting
When hearts with rapture beating
Rang forth in joyful greeting,
"He liveth who was dead!"

Oh, happy recollection!
Oh, joyful Resurrection!
Oh, day of glad affection,
Since death is captive led;
Our King has gone before us,
Our risen Lord bends o'er us,
We swell the joyful chorus—
"He liveth who was dead!"

Oh, mourners sadly weeping,
Your lost ones are not sleeping;
Their Sabbath they are keeping
With Him in Paradise:
To His dear voice they listen
Who burst death's gloomy prison;
"He is not here but risen!"
Our hearts with Him arise.

And we with exultation,
With joyful adoration,
Would sing His great salvation,
Our conquering Lord and Head,
Until by His fair river
Of pleasures failing never
He leads us forth for ever
Who liveth and was dead.

"Let us keep the Feast."

LET us keep the Feast,
With joy and gladness, for the fight is won;
With a song of exultation
For the strength of our salvation,
From the rising to the setting of the sun.

Let us keep the Feast!
"Not here, but risen" is our Sacrifice;
For ever interceding,
Our cause for ever pleading—
With Thee, O risen Saviour, would we rise.

Let us keep the Feast!
Waiting and watching, as a pilgrim band:
In each dear memorial-token
Of a covenant unbroken,
We hold an earnest of the Promis'd Land.

Let us keep the Feast!
The night is dark, the shadows gather deep
But our lights are trimm'd and burning—
We await our Lord's returning—
The Bridegroom tarries, but we may not sleep.

Let us keep the Feast,
By these dim tapers, until break of day:
Till the watchmen sound their warning,
Till the joy come with the morning,
Till the Sun shall bid the shadows flee away.

A Christmas Message.*

FAR from home thy Christmas keeping,
Sad through weariness and pain,
Thou, perchance, hast thought with weeping,
"Christmas-time has come again!"

Dreams of well-remembered places
Fill thy memory to-day;
Longing thoughts of loving faces—
Thoughts of dear ones far away;

Of the little ones who gather
Round the fire the boughs to weave,
Happy homes where mother, father,
Keep with them their Christmas Eve;

Of the days when thou wast singing
Gleeful songs of other times,
While across the fields came ringing
Far and near the Christmas chimes.

Say'st thou now, "Those joys are over;
Not for me those home delights;
Dark the clouds that o'er me hover,
Lone the days and long the nights?

* Written for Hospital distribution.

"Chiming bells and happy voices
Fall but sadly on my ear;
All the world without rejoices;
They are glad—while I am here."

Are these thy words, oh, mourner?
Are these thy thoughts, my friend?
Then listen now to a message
Which home to thy heart we send,

In words which the wind came bringing
From the hush of a quiet room,
Where voices were softly singing
In the twilight's gathering gloom.

And so sweet and clear was the music
Of the message tender and true,
That now in the Christmas season
We would sing it forth to you:—

Song of Christmas.

IS there gladness in the house?
Now lift your song once more;
For Christ, the new-born King,
Doth joy and gladness bring,
And His people praise and sing,
And joyfully adore!

Is there weeping in the house?
Oh weary, weep no more!
For you shines Christmas morn,
And Jesus Christ was born
To comfort those who mourn
On sorrow's lonely shore.

Is there scarceness in the house?
Yet rise in hope once more!
For Christ, the Lord on high,
Who at Christmas time came nigh,
Is listening to thy cry,
And He Himself was poor.

Is there stillness in the house?
A shadow on the floor?
Are there voices hushed and low
Where the mourners come and go?
Oh listen! ye shall know
Christ, who wept, is at the door.

Now let our songs arise;
And let our hearts adore;
For e'en in sorrow's hours,
In sunshine and in showers,
The Christmas joy is ours,
Abiding evermore!

Thus, my sister, thus, my brother,
We to thee would comfort send,
Softly whisp'ring of Another—
Of a nearer, better Friend.

He who at this season holy
Came to earth thy grief to heal,
Led a sorrowing life and lowly;
He hath suffered—He can heal.

Dost thou weep to be forgiven?
From thy load of sins set free?
He, the Lord of earth and heaven,
Bore their chastisement for thee.

Dost thou sigh through ceaseless tossing
On a couch whence sleep has fled;
Grief and pain thy future crossing—
Thine a wearied, aching head?

He has said, who once was weary,
"Lean thy head upon My breast;
Life for Me was lone and dreary,
I know all—yet bring thee rest.

"*I know all;* I stand beside thee;
On My heart thy burden lay;
Safe beneath My wings I hide thee,
Keep with thee thy Christmas Day.

"Trust Me! I will never leave thee;
Love Me! for I love thee well;
Whisper forth the thoughts that grieve thee,
Fear not sin and care to tell.

"Christmas bells *for thee* are ringing,
Christ, thy Lord, *to thee* draws near;
Angels hymns for thee are singing,
Fear thou not: thy King is here!

"Though thy tear-dimmed eyes be holden;
Though My form thou canst not see:
I, who dwell in glory golden—
I, the Lord, am close to thee!"

. . . . . .

Therefore smile amidst thy weeping;
Therefore hope through all thy fears;
Therefore let thy Christmas-keeping
Bring thee sunshine through thy tears:

Cast on Jesus all thy sorrow,
On His strength thy weakness stay;
Trust Him for a brighter morrow,
Keep with Him thy Christmas Day!

Weakness.

DRIFTING seaward, alone and still,
Floating out on a waveless sea ;
The tide may carry me whither it will,
All is quiet and strange for me.

Distant voices along the shore,
Echoes of hope and joy and care ;
There it was that I dwelt before,
My life and its short day's work were there.

Was it strange to be hoping, striving,
Each day fraught with its joy and sorrow ?
Is it strange to be dreamily living
In a passionless day with no thought of morrow ?

Drifting out and out to sea,
Out and out in a helmless boat ;—
To a far-off coast it, perchance, may be,
Whither at length my bark may float.

Soft sweet music of other times
Vaguely murmurs within my ear :
A wafted strain from some far-off chimes,
Bringing back words which I used to hear.

His whose voice was so soft and low
That the tired and weary ones loved it best ;
Those words are tender and sweet to me now—
"Come unto Me ; I will give thee rest."

If I should float to that Land unknown,
Would He stand and meet me upon the shore?—
Not with legion hosts, but Himself alone,—
And say, "Thou shalt never be weary more!"

If my words were only "My Lord, I come!"
Would He whisper again, "I will give thee rest!"
Would He quietly, tenderly, take me Home
To where all the weary in Him are blest?

Not for me at first the full blaze of glory,
The triumphant notes of ten thousand singing,
The antiphonal chant of redemption's story
For evermore from Heav'n's choirs ringing;

Dearer the calm of His quiet smile
Than the welcoming strain of the Seraphim;
I would long to wait for a little while,
To wait, and to be alone with Him.

By the Fire.

SAY, am I still a child?
Or is it that old memories return
As, by strange thoughts beguil'd,
I linger where the smould'ring embers burn?

In days of long ago,
When lighter sports with daylight seem'd to tire,
And shades pass'd to and fro,
And one by one we gather'd round the fire,

Softly our voices fell,
And thicker grew the shadows on the wall;
A silent, secret spell,
With gath'ring darkness stole upon us all.

And wondrous things we saw:
Strange weird-like pictures of the winter's hearth;
With a sort of childish awe
We gave to dim imaginings their birth;

The long cathedral aisle
Those glowing embers pictured to our sight,
And the dark funereal pile
Illumin'd by a strange unearthly light:

And caverns lone and deep,
With broken rocks and ruin'd columns strew'd;
And Druid altars steep,
All in a wild and shadeless solitude.

And other things were there:
Chambers of glory lustrous to behold,
Lit up by torches' glare,
With ceiling and with floor of burnish'd gold;

And ships of various form,
All motionless upon a fiery sea—
A sea without a storm,
And glowing in its own intensity.

With earnest, steadfast gaze
Such changing fantasies our souls descried,
Until the flickering blaze
Grew weary of its fitfulness, and died.

And closer still we drew,
As those fair visions vanish'd one by one;
And the red light paler grew—
Then pass'd away, and darkness reign'd alone.

Thus childhood's hopes depart!
Joy-born imaginings of bliss and fame
Which dwell in every heart,
Rising and falling like the flick'ring flame.

And as our years roll by
We lose the light of many a bright ideal;
Youth's earth-born visions die,
For time is short, and life is very real.

Such musings come and go,
As now alone I linger by the fire;
Musings of joy and woe,
And of fair hopes which time has seen expire:

Until I take my stand
Where I may gaze upon the outspread sky,
And on a glorious band
Of steadfast stars in solemn company.

A still unbroken calm
Over the woods, and o'er the meadows reigns;
As though an ev'ning psalm
Of silent praise were chaunted o'er the plains.

And a voice within my heart
Whispers of hopes irrevocably mine;
Life's flickering joys depart;
But everlasting is the light divine.

The Old Year and the New.

HUSH! the year is dying,
Soft, without a sound;
Snow-flakes, shroud-like, lying
On the earth around:
All its strivings over,
All its story done;

. . . . . .

Now—its mem'ries hover
O'er a year begun.

Some of us were lonely
In its brightest hours;
Sadly whispering, "Only
Let Thy will be ours!"
Some of us were tired
In its summer days:
Weary, we desired
Gladder, brighter ways.

We but seemed repeating
Changeless rounds of life,
Daily, hourly meeting
Well-known cares and strife.
Life a little colder,
Fewer loving faces,
We but growing older
In familiar places.

Now the year is over,
  Let us braver stand,
Seeking to discover
  His—our Father's—hand:
Let us "follow wholly,"
  Though our sight be dim:
He would make us holy
  For a life with Him.

Every day He sends us
  He Himself prepares;
He Himself attends us
  Through its joys and cares;
His true love beseeching,
  Let us, then, draw near;
Seeking guidance, teaching,
  For the op'ning year.

"The Watchman said, 'The Morning cometh.'"

WATCHMAN, what of the night?
The earth is dark and cold:
And but faint is the starry light
Which our waiting eyes behold.
Will the morning never come,
With its beacons in the sky,
To dissipate the gloom
Ere the Bridegroom shall draw nigh?
Watchman, what of the night?

"Oh, slumber not nor sleep,
Though the night be dark and long;
But your solemn vigils keep
Through the Church's even-song:
Arise, and watch, and pray,
For we see the light afar
That heralds in the day
Of the bright and morning star:
Watch and pray!"

We have pray'd and waited on
For our absent King's return;
But the hours have come and gone,
And our tapers dimly burn:

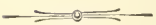
Still dark is the midnight sky,
There are enemies abroad,
And we hear the heathen cry
Saying, "Where is now their God?"
Watchman, what of the night?

"O watching and waiting band,
Now lift ye your heads on high,
For the morning is near at hand,
And the Bridegroom is drawing nigh.
When the tapers are burning dim
We know that the night is o'er;
And the chant of the morning hymn
Shall echo from shore to shore:
Watch and pray!"

We have wash'd our garments white
From the stains of an evil world,
And we wait for the sun in his might,
And the banner of God unfurl'd.
We are looking to Zion's hill,
And we know that the day is near;
But we watch for the summons still,
And the voice that we long to hear.
Watchman, what of the night?

"There are banners of red and gold,
Far out in the shining east;
The curtains of night are uproll'd
For the morn of the marriage-feast.

Still wait for the Bridegroom's voice,
Then go ye forth to meet Him;
Let the hearts of His saints rejoice
As they lift their song to greet Him:
Watch and pray!"



III

CHIMES FROM HEATHER-BELLS;

AND OTHERS

Gales from Heaven, if so He will,
  Sweeter melodies can wake
On the lonely mountain rill
  Than the meeting waters make.
Who hath the Father and the Son
  May be left, but not alone.— KEBLE.

The First Sacrament of the Reformation.

[The ruined Castle Campbell, once the seat of the Dukes of Argyll, commands one of the most picturesque glens among the Ochills. A special interest attaches to it from its having been the scene of John Knox's preaching; tradition indicating the moated court-yard as the site of the first Sacrament of the Scotch Reformation.]

WHERE clamour'd forth in the olden time
The echoes of war and spoil,
Where the stately Ochills lift their crests
Like ancient lords of the soil,—
Brooding apart o'er the vale beneath,
Dark frowning o'er sunnier lands,
Where the rocks are reft with a mighty cleft
Old Castle Campbell stands.

Deep moated round by the fell and flood,
It has mock'd at the foeman's blast;
But Time has stealthily cross'd the moat,
Full sure of his prey at last;
And as warriors of old plough'd the conquer'd site,
For the harvest they sowed in scorn,
He has planted the towers with lichen flowers,
And the bastions with moss-grown thorn.

And long fern-banners droop and wave
Where the standard was rais'd of yore;
And the storm-wind's blast mocks the bugle-call
Of the proud McCullum More;

And where revels rang and where minstrels sang
Holds the night-bird lone possession;
And the white mist creeps up the castle steeps
Like the wraith of a dead procession.

But the breath of the thyme comes soft and sweet
O'er this bed of mountain-sorrel;
And below, the waters still part and meet
Like hearts in a lover's quarrel;
While the rocks look down with the same stern frown
They have worn for ever and ever,
And the breeze flits by, with a low sad sigh,
To the sunbeam's nest on the river.

. . . . . .

Full many a legend of knightly deeds
Might those furrow'd rocks record,
Of war and truce, of the times of the Bruce,
Of the clash of the foeman's sword;
But chiefly I hold the tradition of old
Encircling this grassy knowe,
And set forth my rhyme of the troubled time
Three centuries ago.

When sullenly echoed from o'er the tide
The roll of the Lateran thunder;
And the voice of the North hurl'd defiance forth,
And fetters were snapp'd asunder;
When the ice of a thousand years broke up,
And the torrent ran full and free;
And men dared to think, and men dared to drink
Of the truth which brings liberty.

. . . . . .

A rendezvous rang from the castle walls,
And the clansfolk came thronging together,
By moor and fen, and from distant glen,
And over the purple heather:
"And wherefore," they said, "hath the summons sped,
Bringing hither each true-born vassal?
No war-echoes float o'er the castle moat,—
No war-flag flies from the castle."

They stood on the crest of the wood-girt hill,
Where the black rocks rise to the north,
And each head was bent and each eye intent
As the great Argyll came forth;
And beside him one who with solemn mien
Gaz'd round where the clansmen stood;
Then bade all draw near and with rev'rence hear
The words of the Book of God.

As the river's voice is soft and low
When its first sweet tale is told,
So his words fell clear on each list'ning ear
As he spoke of the days of old:—
Of the old, old time when the Son of God
Trod the wine-press of wrath alone,
And the fight was fought and the victory wrought,
And the crown of the Conqueror won.

As the river awakens the echoing hills
When its voice in the torrent is heard,
So his tone grew loud, and his gesture proud
As he held up the written Word,

And spake of the triumph of Antichrist,
Of the mystical Babylon,
All drunk with the blood of the saints of God,
Afar on her seven-hill'd throne.

"I gaz'd," he cried, "from yon mountain's side,
And I mark'd how the eagle bold
With but one wild whoop, and with one fell swoop,
Tore the lamb from the shelter'd fold:
I look'd out on the sky as the storm drew nigh,
And deepened the black'ning night;
And faintly and far glimmer'd one sweet star
Till the storm-cloud had quench'd her light;

"Where the waters well'd up in their rocky cup
Heard I traitors murm'ring low;
And the stream in its course from a poison'd source
Did the work of the deadly foe.—
Who hath torn the lambs of the Shepherd true?
Hid the light with a pall accurst?
Who hath poison'd the spring which should healing bring,
And life to the soul athirst?

"Hear, Lord, the complaints of the martyr'd saints
Whose souls from Thine altar call!
Like the northern lights of these northern nights
Let the rays of Thy promise fall:
Let the stream of Thy truth renew our youth
For the battle Thy sword must win,
As we spurn on the sod which our fathers trod
The yoke of the Man of Sin!

"And ye who stand in this fatherland,
The land of the hill and flood,
For defence of your rights on these mountain heights
Take oath on the Word of God;
In front of the everlasting hills,
Here—under God's free sky,
For the truth which we hold dearer far than gold
Make promise to live or die!"

He paus'd: and the wind came up the glen
And stirr'd in the sycamore trees;
And men murmur'd low and with knitted brow,
Saying soft "What words are these?"
Then deep as the voice of the river is heard
When it nears the waiting ocean,
His accents swell'd, and each heart was quell'd
In the flood of that stern devotion;

And faint was the sob of the dying blast,
And they listen'd with parted lips
While his speech went on of the great white throne
In St. John's Apocalypse;
Of the noontide blaze of the Ancient of Days,
Which shall burst on a sin-stain'd world,
When the armies of light shall go forth in their might
'Neath the banner of God unfurl'd.

Of the welcoming hymn of the bright Seraphim
For them that have overcome;
Of the victor's palm, of the conqueror's psalm;—
Of a judgment of wrath and doom;

And heads were bow'd in that list'ning crowd,
And wild hearts were still'd in pray'r;—
"O Lamb of God, who hast borne our load,
Be *Thou* our refuge there!"

Then a silence deep wrapp'd the castle-steep,
And men girded their souls for strife;
And full many a heart that had thirsted apart
Drank there of the well of life:
And again the voice of the preacher rose
As he spake unto souls set free
Of the living faith that must conquer death
In the Off'ring of Calvary.

Then look'd he around, and with sudden thought
Bade the true in heart draw near;
"For wherefore," he said, "should the children's bread
Be withheld from the children here?
Not with priestly rite, not by tapers' light,
Come nigh on this mountain shrine,
For each soul releast, here may keep the feast,
And partake of the bread and wine."

The words are spoken; the bread is broken;
The blood-red wine outpour'd,
And hush'd is each breath with a hush like death
In the presence of the Lord;
And with heads made bare, and with silent pray'r
Men meet in the solemn tryst;
While in type are giv'n to heirs of heaven
The Body and Blood of Christ.

'Neath the stately pile of the great Argyll
Was never such feast prepar'd,
Nor within the walls of those ancient halls
Was ever such banquet shar'd;
For when life meets death, and when earth meets heav'n,
And time, eternity,
Glad angels throng with exultant song
O'er souls which the Lord makes free.

No mystic cathedral arches,
No altar with cloth of gold,
No chaunted Gregorian music
Of hidden mysteries told;
But a Gloria in excelsis
Rose from the hills around,
And the waters' voice bade the earth rejoice
And ring with a gladsome sound:

And the beacon of truth enkindled
On the brow of this castle height
Hath never set, but is burning yet
With a brighter and fuller light;
So, with many a thoughtful musing,
I stand on the grassy knowe
Where the brave John Knox wak'd the echoing rocks
Three centuries ago.

The Cairn.

THE Tap o' the hill!
The Tap o' the hill!
The wind rules there at its own wild will!
The wind that I left on its keen sea-watch
I met on the mountain, talking Scotch;
Singing Highland songs in the corries and dells,
And chiming a welcome in purple bells.

We told out our tales as we whispered together,
And it brought me a kiss from the Ochill heather
Instead of a moan from the troubled sea:
And I sang for joy as it sang to me
A wild hill strain at its own good pleasure;
For little the wind recks of time or measure
When it shouts from the cairn, "I am free! I am free!"

The Tap o' the hill!
The Tap o' the hill!
The mountains stand round it, stately and still,
Frowning loftily down while the gale makes sport,
Or murmurs sedition in their high court.
A high court of Parliament! who would not tremble
To scoff where those senators grave assemble?

Grand old chiefs, with their granite boulders,
Each looking over the others' shoulders
To see what the workaday world is about,
While the wind hears their secrets, and whispers them
out.

The Tap o' the hill!
The Tap o' the hill!
The wind sounds a bugle-blast piercing and shrill;
And the trumpet is echoed from far Schihallion,
And the clouds come up marshalled in solemn battalion.
And the pines throw their branches aloft in alarm
At the loud war-whoop which foretelleth the storm.
The sentinel heights look so grim and black
When the note of defiance comes echoing back,
That the wind makes league with some dark hanging
cloud
For a pall funereal their crags to enshroud;
Or loops up the mist like a white curtain'd veil,
That the storm and the floods may make wassail and
riot,
Whilst the blindfolded giants, loud mocked by the gale,
Though they thunder remonstrance, stand sullenly
quiet.
And aloft from Ben Lawers streams the banner of war,
The black flag of cloud spreading terror afar.

Then the deep rolling storm-oratorio is sounded,
And the eagle shrieks back to its eyrie astounded,

And wild wind-instruments make the hills wonder,
And the rocks echo back the loud roar of the thunder,
Till the bandmaster stops, like some strange dilettante,
And changes the tone to a mournful andante:
Then, hurrying afar where the loud torrents dash,
Wakes up the wild waters, and ends with a crash.

The Tap o' the hill!
The Tap o' the hill!
Only the sound of the mountain rill;
The wild-bird's note, with its strange clear thrill,
For we hear no tempest—all, all is still.

Stretching afar, we behold unfurl'd
Our own little bit of the map of the world:
Far off the blue mountains of royal Braemar,
With their knight in armour, stern Lochnagar;
Away and away the wild sea of the North
Comes rolling its tide up the Firth of Forth,
As if to do homage, like some proud vassal,
Where frowns o'er the waters the grim old castle.
Whilst the great Bass Rock,
That has stood the shock
Of the waterfloods' siege for six thousand years,
Still bears their brunt
With his stalwart front,
And his storm-battered casque to the sky uprears.
And blue are thy waters, O bonnie Loch Leven,
And silver thy windings, O stream of Glen Devon!
Each hill has its legend, each brook-side its ditty,
Woven in with the chronicled lore of the city.

We have known them apart, now we know them together,
As they blend in the light of the clear summer weather,
While we stand where the cairn lifts its head from the heather.

The Tap o' the hill!
The Tap o' the hill!
Thoughts come like the wind at their own wild will;
They came to me there, and they come to me still.

At the end of the day, at the close of the fight,
Ere faith be eternally lost in sight,
Shall we wond'ring attain to some mountainous height;
And retrace the rough way that we knew but in part,
Its "waters of comfort," its "waters of strife,"
Out-roll'd in the sunlight, a far-reaching chart,
The marvellous *whole* of the map of our life?—
O'er the ways that perplexed us, each slow-winding track,
That seemed as we trod it a maze and a mystery,
Shall we ever, enlightened, serenely look back,
And, outspread, read the meaning and plan of our history?

Bring a stone, bring a stone for the top of the cairn!
I must lay it thereon with my own two hands,
And throw one more glance on these outstretch'd lands,
And depart with a long, long lesson to learn.
Perchance, in the time of the storm-spirit's power,
This stone may give refuge to some frail flower;

Some tempest-blown quivering insect-thing
May shelter beneath it its rainbow wing:—
I know not;—but yet, with a thought of my own,
I leave on the cairn-side this old gray stone;
And a moss shall grow round it which none shall see—
The invisible lichen of memory;
And my thought shall link closely the mountain to me
When the wild wind and I shall have met by the sea.

The Cauldron Linn.

[The peculiar characteristic of this Fall is the suddenness with which, after a winding and smiling course through the valley, the waters of the Devon are precipitated into the abyss beneath. The similarity of the darkly shadowed basin to a boiling cauldron has given its name to the Linn.]

THE summer sky is fair,
And incense ev'rywhere
From the soft green hill-side ascendeth unto heav'n;
And the little children play
Who would fain entrap the ray
Light sporting in thy stony bed, bright rock-cradled Devon.

O waters, hush'd and still
'Neath the shadows of the hill,
For a brief while reposing your rock-barriers within,
Your fate is drawing near,
The cataract I hear,
The deep rolling thunders of the dark Cauldron Linn.

Now solemnly and slow,
Now murm'ring as ye go,
Now headlong and impetuous into darkness and to gloom,
With a sudden wild despair,
With a roar that fills the air,
Ye are rushing onward, onward to the sealing of your doom.

Like the vengeance of the Lord
Swiftly, suddenly outpour'd
When the measure of His wrath is full for arrogance and sin;
Like the thunders pealing loud
From high battlements of cloud,
Crash the wild surging waters of the dark Cauldron Linn.

Where the grim rocks blacken
Waves the long green bracken,
Drooping tearfully its plumage by the dark waters' grave;
And the wild ash weeps
O'er the stern unfathom'd deeps,
Like the pitying love of woman—fond, though powerless to save.

They rest not day and night
Those thunders of the height,
The solemn hills for ages past have echoed forth their din;
No storied key unlocks
The secrets of those rocks—
The deep hidden mysteries of the dark Cauldron Linn.

Yet, when the day is done,
I have heard that the red sun
In haste, ere his setting, throws a sunbeam away,—
Which, falling on the flood,
Like a messenger from God,
Sheds a brief rainbow light ere it dies with the day.

And thus, child of man,
For a brief, brief span
The current of thy life serene and tranquilly may roll;
But beware, ah beware!
For a warning voice is there,
And dark, drear, and stormy are the conflicts of the soul.

Yet, when the hour has come
Of fearfulness and gloom,
When help fails without, and when heart fails within,
May a rainbow light of love
Bring thee hope from above,
Like the sun's parting smile on the dark Cauldron Linn!

Hidden Ones.

"Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, ... to cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man; to satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?"

"He satisfieth the longing soul."

FROM lone and desert places,
From silent mountain sod,
The happy wild flowers' praises
Rise secretly to God.

Though all unseen, and hidden
From distant passer-by,
The sunbeams bright are bidden
To cheer them from on high.

And early in the morning
There falls the dewy rain,
Which sunbeams home returning
Will carry back again.

And rills in secret flowing
For ev'ry thirsty stem,
And the mountain breezes blowing,
Make melody for them:

For deep in clefts and valleys
Soft christ'ning founts are stor'd
Whence each low flow'ring chalice
Is water'd by the Lord.

Oh, sad and weary-hearted,
  Who think'st thyself alone,
New strength shall be imparted,
  Thine ev'ry need is known:

Fresh streams of heav'nly blessing,
  And radiance from on high,
The loneliest life, possessing,
  Hath joys which never die.

Farewell to the Ochills.

FAREWELL to Fossaway! thus they are over
The glad summer hours all link'd with the past;
E'en now the long hill I but faintly discover,
Yet give one more look, and that look is the last.

No more shall my eyes to the hill-side awaken,
No more shall I hear the low song of the burn;
No more shake the dew from the heather and bracken,
Or seek in the kirkyard deep lessons to learn.

E'en now, as our path skirts the shores of Loch Leven,
And winds thro' the valley all tranquil and lone,
My heart turns anew to the braes of Glen Devon,
And mem'ry retraces bright days that are gone.

Farewell to the Ochills! now sunshine and show'rs
Are wed in the rainbow which hangs in their sky;
Past joys shed their radiance o'er sad parting hours,
And gladness and sorrow are link'd in "good-bye!"

First Snowdrops.

LET us softly bid them welcome,
Touch them with gentle fingers:
They meet our eyes like a glad surprise,
While the snow on the hill-side lingers.

White and green on their crests they wear,
Each tender and shy new-comer;
White for a token of winter bare,
And green for the spring and summer.

But oh, they are quiet, and cold, and still,
Almost too calm for gladness;
Snowy watchers beneath the hill,
Are ye silent for joy or sadness?

The lily's far-breathed fragrance
Her tender story tells;
But the snowdrops keep their secrets
Like pale white sentinels.

Is it the Christmas secret,
Bequeath'd from winter rose,
Which bows each head to its lowly bed
Mid February snows?

Or is it that the seasons
Will bring with joy their sorrows,
And the snowdrops droop in tender group
'Neath the shadow of to-morrows?

Yet have they each a message
  Which we may understand,
We who because of spring-time
  Are glad throughout the land :

They, in their fragile whiteness,
  The firm tradition keep
From year to year, in season drear,
  Of waking after sleep :

And we with living voices,
  With glad and bright affection,
E'en here may sing of a better spring
  Of life and resurrection.

Never Dim.

THE storm-cloud and the darkness came together up the channel,
As the watchman at the lighthouse fired his beacons for the night;
And from every bright reflector and each slow revolving panel
Gleamed forth to vessels far and near a warning from the height.

The helmsman of the stately ship doing battle in the distance,
The fisherman who turned his boat before the storm to flee,
Knew the light which from the rock-bound shore burned bright for his assistance,
And women blessed the beacon-fire who prayed for those at sea.

"Now tell me," said the stranger who looked forth beside the master,
"Failed ye never through the months and years the warning-lamps to trim?"

Then came there o'er the other, as with shadow of disaster,
A thought of woe and shipwreck should the light-house fires burn dim.

"But for a single hour did the beacon-lamp shine dimly,
Though weeks and months should pass away, the tale would come at last
Of reckonings lost, and stranded boats, and seamen fighting grimly
For the refuge and the harbour in the darkness over-past.

"Night by night throughout the year goes forth the lonely lighthouse keeper,
As the storm-wind, fiercely raging, sounds its bugle-call to him;
Dark were the morning's waking at his post were he a sleeper:
No, never for an hour may the lighthouse fire burn dim."

Through the night of sin and darkness there are thousands roaming blindly,
Who, wandering and tempest-tost, no guiding-star have known;
One only light, one beacon lamp, with warning ray and kindly,
Revealing all the danger, makes the only refuge known.

Are we holding forth the Word of Life to wanderers in the distance?

Are we telling of His love who calls the tempest-tost to Him?

Father of lights! to Thee we pray; now grant us Thine assistance;

Keep Thou our hearts from failing, and our lamps from burning dim!

How Great Works are Done.

WE are not here for holidays; our lives are not for dreaming,
While toiling bands and busy hands are lab'ring all around;
Men are stirring, wheels are whirring, fires gleaming, vessels steaming,
There is work on land and on ocean, and in regions underground:
And full often, as I ponder o'er some lofty pile up springing,
On triumphant deeds accomplished, on some mighty victory won,
I find that in my ears a chime of thought has been set ringing:
"*All great works are made up of little works well done.*"

Let us stand upon the shore, and hear afar the people cheering,
See the vessel at her moorings, proudly waiting for the launch!
In eager flocks from all the docks the workmen are appearing,
Who laid her planks in busy ranks with labour true and staunch.

The plate-layers, and iron smiths, the carpenter with hammer,
The sawyers and the armourers, and craftsmen one by one,
With ready glee give three times three, and swell the joyful clamour,
Their "great work was made up of little works well done!"

How grew the great cathedral pile, her buttresses and towers?
Whose hands laid the foundations deep, and raised the walls on high?
While slowly the grey arches rose, long days of working hours,
And years of busy working days, in patient toil went by.
Not the architects alone, not only earnest master-builders,
But the men who hewed the timbers, and who quarried forth the stone;
The masons and the sculptors, and the carvers and the gilders;
"The great work was made up of little works well done!"

Be in earnest! be in earnest! our lives are not for trifles,
In God's great building-army here no efforts can be lost:
The victories of our Leader are not won with swords and rifles,
But noiseless deeds and secret prayers oft spread the triumph most:

Thro' all the land, let every hand give service for the Master;
They work who best remember that "well prayed is well begun;"
Each loving thought with action fraught will speed the victory faster,
For "great works are made up of little works well done!"

Gathered by the Way.

ON a hill-side path in a distant land,*
A little branch from a vine-stem lay;
It had dropp'd by chance from some gardener's hand,
And was withering fast in the burning day:
Faded, and dusty, and cast aside,
As the sun arose it must soon have died,
But for a maiden who pass'd that way.

She was weary, and very poor;
But she stoop'd to gather the lonely bough;
And bore it on to her cottage door,
And planted it tenderly, bending low:
And with care, as if for some flowering gem,
She watered and tended the wounded stem,
And the showers and sunshine bade it grow.

Years pass'd on, and a stately vine
Of choicest growth, and of branches fair,
Embower'd the maiden, who oft would twine
Its delicate leaves in her flowing hair;
And who, smiling betimes, as she thought of the day
When the faded bough on the roadside lay,
Was rich from the wealth of the fruit it bare,
Which they sought from afar for its clusters rare.

* California.

You and I, like that far-off maiden,
In a path which sometimes seems rough and rude,
In a world with trouble and sorrow laden,
May gather up openings for doing good:
A smile may lighten some weary heart,
A word may courage and hope impart;
A whisper—"Thy sorrow is understood!"

Some soul forgotten, perchance, by all,
Is ready to perish on life's rough way;
We may stretch forth our hands where the faint ones fall,
We may raise them up, we may love and pray;
We see not the fruit of our planting now,
We know not whither this thing may grow,
But we work and wait for a coming Day.

Two Weeping Conquerors.

A CONQU'ROR wept! 'tis chronicled in story
How he who won his fame o'er prostrate foes
On high embattled pinnacle of glory
Wept in unwelcome hour of forced repose.
"Now no more worlds to conquer!" was his cry;
"And nought remains for victors but to die!"

Another conqu'ror wept:—o'er one fair city,
Which He full fain had sheltered 'neath His wings,
He shed strong tears of tenderness and pity
Whom earth refus'd, whom Heav'n called King of kings:
Then dying for the foes He yearned to save,
He vanquished death, and triumph'd o'er the grave.

September.

THE earth has shaken her lap of treasure,
Her children are cared for; her work is done
She smiles upon them in quiet leisure,
And goes to dress for the afternoon.

Clad in gold brocade, and in purple stately,
With shimmering mist she will veil her brow;
Then calm and tranquil will rest sedately
Till winter shall bring her a cap of snow.

Oh the rest after working hours!
Oh the hush of the afternoon!
Would we know that stillness and peace for ours,
Let us up and be doing;—the light falls soon.

The Yule-log.

WE have gathered the logs for the Christmas fire;
Where are the children to bring them in?
Pile them steadily, higher and higher!
Here is the youngest! let him begin!
Not a finer Yule-log burns in all the shire
Than this, which the woodman has toiled to win.

Christmas was glorious in England olden:
So they tell us in ancient rhymes;
Let us make the age that we live in golden!
For days to come live out "good old times:"
Our hist'ries, Heav'n's message to Earth unfolden,
Our gladness an echo of Christmas chimes.

Let us throw on the flames of our kindling fire
Harsh remembrance and thought of feud;
Vengeful feeling, self-will'd desire,
All that was bitter and coarse and rude;
And now, while the blaze rises higher and higher,
Let our Christmas hearth be a holy rood!

Let us warm our hearts while we warm our fingers,
Peace and goodwill holding gentle thrall;

While the Angels' psalm on our memory lingers
Let kindly words tell of love to all.
Open the door to the carol singers!
Let the Bethlehem hymn sound from hearth and hall.

Thou hast no frown for us, cold December!
Care and trouble aside we leave;
Golden the light of each glowing ember,
While our voices we blend, and glad hopes we weave:
And for absent friends, whom we all remember,
Let us breathe a prayer on this Christmas Eve!

By and By.

WE must leave it for a while,
The seed which we have sown;
The spring-tide will not smile
Until wintry months have flown:
The land is not asleep
'Neath the mantle of her snows;
And roots are striking deep
While the storm of winter blows:
When April comes to earth,
Clouds and sunshine in her sky,
The seedling will spring forth;
We shall see it by and by.

We stand upon the shore
Whence the stately ships go forth
From the East to bring us store,
And full cargoes from the North;
But years may come and go
While the watchers look in vain,
Till the children murmur low,
"They will ne'er return again!"
And o'er the pathless sea
Their mother strains her eye,
Saying, "We must patient be!
They are coming by and by!"

The message that we sent
To call the wanderer home,—
We wearied till it went;
But the answer has not come.
And early in the day,
And in the evening late,
Hoping still, we softly say,
"We must trust and we must wait!"
And at each glad New Year
We whisper with a sigh,
"The spring will bring him here;
We shall see him by and by!"

We must work and we must wait
With patient heart and will,
Though the harvest may be late,
Though the promise tarry still;
Though no vessel we discern
Bringing tidings to our shore,
Of the wanderers' return
Through the message which it bore,
Yet, not seeing, we believe
In a word which cannot die;
Our times with God we leave;
We must wait till by and by.

Until Evening.

DAY awaking,
Morning breaking,
Reapers' toil:
Sickles gleaming,
Sunlight streaming,
O'er the soil:
Harvest golden,
Nought withholden
Of the spoil.

Noon-glare blinding,
Reapers binding
Yellow grain:
Yonder grouping,
Yonder drooping
On the plain:
When soft even
Veils the heaven
Rest is given—
Not till then.

Stealing shadows,
Dewy meadows,
Gathering gloom:

Twilight falling,
Children calling,
Father, come!
Tired reapers,
Quiet sleepers,
Rest and Home.

"At the Last."

WHEN the twilight gathers fast,
With a quiet still and deep,
When the busy day has past,
And the weary "falls on sleep;"
When the life-long toil is o'er,
At the setting of the sun,
Comes joy for evermore
With the Master's word "*Well done!*"

'Mid the tread of many feet,
'Mid the hurry and the throng,
In the burden and the heat,
Have the working hours seemed long?
Softly the shadow falls,
And the pilgrim's race is run;
While through celestial halls
Resounds the glad "*Well done!*"

Well worth the daily cross;
Well worth the earnest toil;
Well worth reproach and loss,
The fight on stranger soil!
Let us lift our hearts, and pray,
And take our journey on;
Work while 'tis call'd to-day
With the thought of that "*Well done!*"

New Year's Eve.

WITH echoing chime, in the midnight time,
The good old year will end;
And with earnest care and with loving prayer,
I think of thee, my friend.

Thine be joy in the year before thee,
Thine be love from thy loved ones round;
Hope's glad sunlight stream brightly o'er thee,
Rest and calm in thy home abound!

Be it thine in the year beginning,
Grief to lessen—to lighten care;
Thine to shine on the sad and sinning
With loving deeds, and with earnest prayer;

Thine to know, amid shades descending,
One, whose presence shines bright and clear
Thine a gladness that knows no ending,—
The changeless joy of a changeless year

Thus I think of thee, thus I pray for thee,
Now at the old year's end:
Heaven's blessing light up thy way for thee!
I wish thee joy, my friend.

IV

CHIMES OF CHILD-LAND

"My Lord God, how well this life and play of children must please Thee! Little children have such choice thoughts of God; how He is in heaven, and their own dear Father."—MARTIN LUTHER.

"Great reverence is due to a child."—LATIN PROVERB.

The Child Jesus.

THERE came a little Child to earth
Long ago:
And the angels of God proclaimed His birth,
High and low.
Out on the night so calm and still
Their song was heard,
For they knew that the Child on Bethlehem's hill
Was Christ the Lord.

. . . . . .

Far away in a goodly land,
Fair and bright,
Children with crowns of glory stand,
Robed in white;
In white more pure than the spotless snow,
And their tongues unite
In the psalm which the angels sang long ago
On Christmas night.

They sing how the Lord of that world so fair
A Child was born,
And that they might a crown of glory wear,
Wore a crown of thorn:
And in mortal weakness, in want, and pain,
Came forth to die,
That the children of earth might for ever reign
With Him on high.

He has put on his Kingly apparel now,
In that goodly land:
And He leads to where fountains of water flow
That chosen band:
And for evermore, in their garments fair
And undefil'd,
Those ransom'd children His praise declare
Who was once a Child.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have Me to Do?"

I.

O COULD I have been in the Holy Land
When our dear Lord Christ was there,
Could I have been one of the chosen band
Appointed His path to share,
My chief delight both by day and by night
Had been for His wants to care.

I could not have flown upon angel's wings
His ministry to fulfil;
I could not have brought Him costly things;
But with reverent heart, and still,
I would daily have stored each sacred word
Declaring the Master's will.

And I might have sought through the fields of corn
For the ripest and richest grain;
He would not have looked on my gift with scorn,
Nor have spurned it with cold disdain;
But He would have smiled on the eager child
Whose offering was not in vain.

Or I would have journeyed with willing feet
To the hills of the trailing vine,
And the richest clusters, purple and sweet,
Would have brought to their Lord and mine,—
In words repeating their lowly greeting,
"The fruits of the earth are Thine!"

And oh, if my Lord had been passing near
In the glare of the noon-tide heat,
With cool well-water, sparkling and clear,
I had waited His steps to meet;
And with loving word, saying, "Drink, my Lord,"
Would have knelt at the Saviour's feet.

But the earth was orphaned when Jesus went;
I wish we could see Him here!
Or at least that a message to me were sent,
That an angel might once appear,
Who with gracious speech would appoint to each
Some work for the Master here!

II.

A message has come from the Holy Land,
From the King who once dwelt below,
A message for all who obedient stand,
And are waiting to serve Him now;
O Christ our Lord, speak Thou the word,
Be it ours Thy will to know!

"I am walking still on the distant earth
Where I once had my sad abode:
Not in easy paths, not in scenes of mirth,
Not in pleasure's ensnaring road,
But in lonely ways and through weary days,
Still wanders the Son of God.

"Men pass me by and they know me not,
Though their welcome I still implore
In many a dreary and desolate spot
By the voice of the sad and poor:
Who will not hear when their feet draw near
Is turning Christ from the door.

"Speak loving words by the lowly bed
Of her who in sorrow lies;
With tender hand raise the drooping head
And bring light into tearful eyes;
Still the Master needs such gentle deeds,
And such lowly sacrifice.

"The bread of life to the weary soul
The Saviour still bids thee break;
And living water which maketh whole
To the thirsty in spirit take:
Such offerings meet lie at Jesu's feet,
When given for His dear sake.

"From thee let the tidings spread abroad
Of the love which brings sinners nigh;
That He who once bow'd 'neath our sorrow's load
Still heals as He passes by;
That life is given, and hope and Heaven,
To all who for mercy cry.

"Thus do His will while thy path still lies
Through the earth which He trod for thee,—
For a little while, till thy waking eyes
Shall the King in his beauty see;
And the glad sweet word be in glory heard
'*Thou hast done it unto Me!*'"

New Year's Morning.

WE made our plan by the fire's red light,
As we sat on the hearth-rug, Janie and I;
We wanted so much to sit up last night,
To sit up, and to see the old year die.

We thought how much we should like to hear
If the clock sounded just as at other times,
And to wish each other a Happy New Year
As the last stroke died of the midnight chimes.

But they all of them shook their heads, and said,
How long we should both of us have to wait;
And that birds in their nests go so soon to bed,
And how cross we should grow if we sat up late.

Yet, once we stayed up until half-past ten,
When we went to the feast at the harvest-home;
We haven't been much more cross since then,
And it's very seldom that New Years come.

But we couldn't get them to give us leave,
Though they let us stay until nearly nine;
And then—the last thing on our New Year's eve—
We peeped out to see if the night was fine.

We waited until we were left alone,
And then in the darkness we raised the blind;
To have wakened and found the old year gone
Without one good-bye, would have been unkind.

It seemed to us that the world outside
  Had never before been so full of sighing—
As if down the valley, and far and wide,
  Everything knew that the year was dying.

Round the church, from across the meadows,
  The wind was sounding like burial marches;
And where house-lights glimmered the muffled shadows
  Seemed stealing past towards the old grey arches.

And two stars like funeral tapers shone
  Through the clouds which had gathered across the sky;
Heavy cloud-blinds which would be let down,
  We said, when the good old year should die.

Then we promised each other to lie awake,
  And we tried very hard the watch to keep
But Janie's eyes *would* grow heavy, and ache,
  And at last we both of us fell asleep.

And now, and now it is New Year's day,
  And the snow has fallen all white and glistening,
Over the meadows and far away,
  A spotless robe for the New Year's christening.

Have angels or fairies been here by night,
  To where earth and leaves were all brown and sodden?
I want Janie to wake and look out at the sight,
  At the pure white glitter of snow untrodden.

Untrodden now !—o'er the meadows hoary,
Soon many feet will pass to and fro :
At the end of the day we shall read its story
In foot-prints left on the spotless snow.

Every one who comes through the garden,
Must leave his track on the path to-day ;
A track which the clear sharp frost will harden,
Till the sun shall have melted the ice away.

I think I am glad,—it seems almost right
That things this morning should happen so,—
That the world without should be hung in white,
And not a foot-print have marked the snow.

I suppose they would call it a childish dreaming,
Which grown-up people can't stay to hear,
But the things outside in the world are seeming
Like a picture to me of the opening year.

I mean, that it seems as if, like the snow,
An unwritten page were before us spreading ;
The year is new and unsullied now—
The path which we all shall so soon be treading.

A path in which each of us leaves a track,
In which foot-prints of children's feet remain ;
A path over which we can't travel back,
For old years never are new again.

I think that the months pass so very slowly,
Though one's parents say that they fly too fast:
I wish I could keep this New Year holy,
Better by far than I kept the last!

I can't, without Him for my one true Guide,
Whose face the children in heav'n behold:
Where the snow is untrodden, the path untried,
He, only, aright can my steps uphold.

He can make me walk as His loving child,
He can teach me to work for Him here below;
And oh, when my ways have been sin-defil'd,
He Himself can wash me whiter than snow.

. . . . . .

Janie, I've been the first to waken,
And oh! such beautiful things are here!
The mists and darkness their flight have taken,
And I want to wish you a Happy New Year.

Wake up, Janie, and see the sight!
Wake up, Janie, and look at the snow!
The good old year died at twelve last night,
It's a happy New Year to us, Janie, now!

"You may Pick the Daisies."

I OFT-TIMES wonder men should sigh
For great and costly treasure,
For some exalted destiny,
For earth's forbidden pleasure:
And wistful memories return
Of childhood's happy hours,
And of a lesson children learn—
A lesson from the flowers.

When Spring has come to the waiting earth,
And buds peep forth to greet her,
And new-born flowers in waking mirth
Uplift their heads to meet her,
In the full joy of Easter-tide,
A thousand choirs are singing;
And children's voices far and wide
In happy notes are ringing.

They raise their eyes to the glittering banks,
Where choicest flowers are blowing;
And they linger where in shining ranks
Earth's beautiful things are growing;
Then falls upon each list'ning ear
The well-known voice parental,
And the little children stay to hear
Its accents low and gentle.

"Not where the blossoms choice and rare
In bright array are shining,
In shelter'd nook and gay parterre
Their tendrils intertwining,
But where the flower of low degree
Its snowy head upraises,
There, children, let your footsteps be,
For *you may pick the daisies.*"

In every heart there is a cell
Fenced round by deep affections,
Where, hidden from the world, there dwell
Our childhood's recollections:
And we can each recall the voice
In well-remember'd places,
Which bade us leave the flow'rets choice,
And stoop to pick the daisies.

That well-known voice no more is heard,
Those childish days are over,
Yet may we in that simple word
A deeper tone discover:
For as around their earthly guide
The little children gather,
So we our ways to Him confide
Who bids us say, "Our Father."

He leads us in a lowly path,
His love is true and tender,
And He bids us with a trusting faith
Our all to Him surrender;

And every sigh for fair estate
And earthly joy, resigning,
With willing heart on Him to wait,
And follow unrepining.

Yet, wheresoe'er our Father leads,
Throughout life's wild'ring mazes,
The children's flow'rets lift their heads,
And "we may pick the daisies."
Our home delights, the smiles of friends,
The tranquil joys and lowly,
Which day by day His goodness sends,
With love which makes them holy;

The countless gifts His hand supplies,
No needful thing denying,
Should bid us yield e'en what we prize,
For all on Him relying.
We are His children! Be it ours
Through life to tune His praises;
To leave untouch'd forbidden flow'rs,
And stoop to pick the daisies.

The Bell-bird.

[These birds are, perhaps, more numerous than any others in the interior of Australia. A recent traveller writes thus: "Never did the bell-bird's note fall on our ears there but as the harbinger of good, for never did we hear it but we were sure to find water nigh at hand: and many a time has it raised my drooping spirits, and those of my companions, when in almost hopeless search for springs."

The little bell-bird always flies to water at sunset, and its ringing note proclaims to all around where the precious treasure may be had.]

THE BIRD WHICH CALLS TO THE WATER.

WHEN far in the West the red sun is descending,
When the flowers on the breeze breathe a sigh for the rain,
When, seeking for water, the traveller is wending
His wearisome way o'er the summer-dried plain,
A clear note comes ringing,
Its glad promise bringing,
A message of hope never sounded in vain.

No longer seek sadly in channel and hollow
The draught which so fain the lone trav'ller would see;
But the clear-sounding note of the sunset-bird follow,
It will guide to the stream flowing freshly and free:
The bell-bird is calling,
And water is falling,
Is falling, O travel-worn wand'rer, for thee.

Afar thro' the world there roam, helpless and friendless,
Souls thirsting for water, hearts weary with care;
Till some guiding-note reach them their search must be endless;
To the waters of life let us bid them repair:
The daylight is going,
But the fountain is flowing,
And all who are weary its blessings may share.

"Oh, wand'ring and helpless ones, come to the waters!"
Let the cry echo forth to each far distant shore:
"The fountain is here for your sons and your daughters,
Come now, ere the sunlight of welcome be o'er!
Full, free, and for ever
Flows life's brimming river,
Who comes unto Jesus shall never thirst more!"

Daisy Chains.

THE violets in the hedgerows,
And the bees in chorus humming,
And a fragrance rare in the sunny air,
And a breath of summer coming;

And a Saturday half-holiday,
And all of us together
Making long yards of daisy-chain
In the happy April weather.

We wander'd up towards the church,
Fresh violets to gather;
For every Sunday morning
There's a knot of flowers for father:

And as a nest of blossoms white,
Half-hidden, met my eye,
We heard a step and a pleasant voice,
And our clergyman came by.

And he spoke to us so kindly
As we curtsied in the lane,
That I offer'd him my flowers,
And show'd our daisy-chain.

His hair is white as silver,
And he stroked me with his hand,
Then half-aloud spoke words like these,
Which I scarce could understand:—

"These make their chains of daisies,
And some forge chains of gold,
And those there are whom prison chains
From light and hope withhold:

"And, children, you may daily,
By lowly deeds of love,
With tender care and secret prayer
And sunlight from above,

"Weave chains that ne'er are riven,
Entwining heart with heart,
And linking earth and heaven,
Which seem so far apart."

And then he cross'd the churchyard,
And I thought he look'd and sigh'd
As on the Sunday after
Our sweet Miss Alice died:

Miss Alice, whom the village call'd
The fairest of its flowers,
But who now lies still beneath the hill,
And will never more be ours.

And as I weave my chain, and take
The path by which he went,
With every link I think and think,
And wonder what he meant.

The Easter Gospel.

HARK! the Easter bells are ringing,
Flinging music far and wide;
All the world with life upspringing,
Welcomes in our Easter-tide.

Joyfully in earth and heaven
Echoes the triumphant lay,
"Christ, the Lamb for sinners given,
Jesus Christ is risen to-day."

Well do I remember still
Easter joys of other days,
Our grey church upon the hill,
Notes of resurrection praise;

And how in the glad spring weather
Op'ning blossoms seemed to say,
"Let us all rejoice together!
Children, this is Easter Day!"

How we listened for the choir,
And the anthem's joyful strain;
Higher rose the notes and higher,
Praises of the Lamb once slain:—

"Jesus here on earth despised,
Now in heav'n our King and Priest,
Christ for us is sacrificed,
Therefore let us keep the Feast!"

All the outer world was singing!
Even when the music ceas'd,
On and on the words seemed ringing,
"Therefore let us keep the Feast!"

While we heard with childish awe
That strange tale of Israel's flight,
And in solemn vision saw
Wonders of the Paschal night;

While with tenderer affection,
Later still we listened on,
Hearing of the resurrection
From the Gospel of Saint John,

Angel voices still seemed telling
Of the King from death releast,
And the answering chorus swelling,
"Therefore let us keep the Feast!"

And of all those Easter glories
One for me outshone the rest,
And of all the Easter stories,
That of John I loved the best;

Telling how with love and pity
Women watched, and wept, and prayed,
And within the Holy City
Through the Sabbath sadly stayed;

And how Mary, who departed
To the grave ere break of day,
Weeping stood, and broken-hearted,
At the place where Jesus lay:

Where the white-robed angels kept
Solemn guard beside the tomb:
How I longed, that while she wept
Christ, her risen Lord, would come!

Longed to hear the story faster,
With its "*Mary!*" low and sweet,
With its cry, "Rabboni!" Master!
As she worshipp'd at his feet;

Longed to share that wondrous greeting,
Longed to worship and adore;
Still with new-born joy repeating,
"Jesus lives for evermore!"

Now, though childish days are over,
Still I love that story best;
Still new meaning can discover
In the risen Lord's behest:

"Go, and tell my waiting brothers
That their Lord to heaven ascends;
Mary, go and bring to others
Tidings which the Master sends."

Is for us that charge intended?
Was for us that message meant?
Has the great commission ended,
First by weeping Mary sent?

May not *we* on Easter morning,
Bending o'er the open grave,
Hear a voice of love and warning
From His lips who died to save?

"If ye love me, tell my brothers
Of the Life, the Truth, the Way;
Go, and spread abroad to others
All the joy of Easter day."

Let us each, then, live to carry
Tidings of a risen Christ;
Let us each, like happy Mary,
Be His glad Evangelist:

Till redeemed, transformed, forgiven,
Through his death from death released,
'Mid the Easter joys of heaven
We for ever keep the Feast.

Harvest Hymn.

SOWERS went throughout the land,
In the time of autumn leaves;
Each with full and ready hand,
Each with thought of harvest sheaves.
Let us thus be doing
Work, O God, for Thee!
Daily, hourly, sowing
For Eternity.

Husbandmen through winter cold,
Showery spring, and summer drought,
Kept their watch o'er weald and wold,
To the fields their labour brought.
Heavenly Father, make us
Husbandmen for Thee!
For Thy workers take us,
Thine the glory be!

Reapers now in golden fields
Bind apace the heavy corn;
Earth her willing tribute yields,
Joyful shines the harvest morn.
Slumb'ring souls and sleeping,
Master, dost Thou see?
Let the thought of *reaping*
Waken us for Thee.

Now the close of work has come,
Garner'd is the golden grain;
Glad the song of Harvest Home
Echoes through the fields again.
Hear us, O our Father,
Let Thy kingdom come;
Then Thy children gather
To the Harvest Home!

The Vintage Gatherers.

WHEN the harvest is over in English fields,
And the reaper has garner'd his latest sheaves,
And autumn secrets in copse and wood
Flush out from glowing September leaves,
Then ripe for the gath'ring and fair in growth,
Lie the trellised vines of the sunny South.

Gleaming soft in purple and gold,
From under the bowers of leafy green,
The clustering grapes in their own fair homes
Tender, and shy, and bright are seen:
No treasures on earth have so fair a shrine
As the bounteous grapes of the southern vine.

Many a trav'ller with weary tread
Will rejoice because of the cluster sweet
Many an one on a couch of pain
The purple spoil with a smile will greet;
The children laugh in their Italian homes,
And sing for joy when the vintage comes.

Thus it is throughout all the earth
That our Father works unto fruitful ends,
His dews and show'rs, and man's hard toil,
Crowning with blessing the gifts He sends;
With loving care and with wise design,
Still the Master turns water into wine.

Each of us, if we live for Him,
If we work in the vineyard for Christ our Lord,
May look for His blessing day by day
On each lowly effort, each Christ-like word;
May our voices echo the welcoming strain,
When the Lord of the vineyard shall come again!

Our Burn.

I WONDER what we in the dale would do
Without our burn of the valley,
Which forth from its cradle high up in the hills
Comes leaping with smile and sally,

Till it eddies soft where the green bank dips,
Its waters in shadow darkling,
While Johnny and Harry sail their ships,
Their eyes with gladness sparkling.

Where high in the dale the miners toil,
Hard earning their daily bread,
Our burn comes down like a son of the soil,
And works away at the lead:

It turns the wheels, it makes the steam,
It washes the ore with zest,
And does the work of a cart and team
In carrying off the rest.

It sings all the time while the rollers turn,
It's first in the field on Monday,
And six good days in the week works the burn,
Then runs clear and bright on Sunday.

Clear and bright; and when church is done,
We wander among its daisies,
And mark how its waters reflect the sun,
With a Sunday song of praises.

It turns the mill-wheel further down ;
  It grinds the flour for bread ;
It works at a trade in the nearest town,
  Besides its craft in lead :

It makes a leap with a bright cascade
  To help in the dalesmen's quarry ;
It murmurs soft where the sick are laid,
  And whispers low, " I'm sorry ! "

And by and by it falls in with the Wear,
  Which visits through half the county ;
Many a tale, both far and near,
  Is told of the river's bounty ;

But we of the dale all know full well,
  That *our burn*, with nameless waters,
Swells the busy flood, and, unknown, brings good
  To earth's toiling sons and daughters.

Come Harry, Johnny ; it's getting late !
  You must bring your ships to port ;
The light fades early across the moors,
  For the days are growing short.

You want a story ! no, not to-night ;
  You've enough with our burn's own teaching :
An ev'ning's sermon for you and me,
  Its voice is steadily preaching :—

"Listen!" it says, on its busy way,
"Be earnest, and brave, and true;
And set to work without any delay,
Wherever there's work to do.

"In giving forth the burn of the north
Finds freshness, life, and gladness;
His hand receives who freest gives,
And most brings hope to sadness.

"On Sundays leave your work behind,
And sing with glad thanksgiving,
For Sunday praise lights up other days,
And joy brings life to living.

"And let your stream, unknown, unseen,
Swell wider streams of pity;
We must work and pray, not play and dream,
In village and town and city.

"Many an one in pain and fear,
For the water of life is pining,
Many a land in darkness drear
Awaits the true light's shining.

"Our Father dear would have your hearts
To His glad service given;
From the mountain burn let the children learn
On earth to live for heaven."

Rookhope.

In the Swing.

THE picture-book days of the year are over,
The waving flowers, the flush of June;
The harvest-reaping, the purple clover,—
We shall be talking of Christmas soon!

Even the gold of our calm October
Has faded at last into brown and gray;
I, with the year, must be growing sober,
For I do not care to swing high to-day.

Backwards and forwards! slower and slower!—
There fly the rooks to the top of the spire!
The November clouds drop lower and lower,
While they whirl solemnly higher and higher.

Are you chattering there of the fortunate swallows,
Who afar to the summer-lands have flown?
To orange gardens and vine-clad hollows,
Till our winter days shall have passed and gone.

Or, architect birds, are you holding a meeting
For settling repairs of the winter nests?
Each in his own solemn voice repeating
His sage decree and his grave behests.

Wise old rooks at the top of the steeple!
You only caw while the other birds sing:
I think you are rather like grown-up people,
Who have to look on while we young ones swing.

Grown-up people! I sometimes wonder
When I hear them talking of days gone by,
Whether they ever sit still and ponder
On the year which only grows up to die.

Is it because they have known so many
That they speak of dead years as familiar things?
I, who scarcely remember any,
Wonder at all that each *season* brings.

It seems almost sad that when sowing and reaping,
And the beautiful work in the world is done,
The earth should wake always from rest in sleeping
To find quite a strange new year begun.

I was thinking on Sunday, half through the sermon,
Of the short sweet Psalm that was read before,—
Of the hill of Zion, and dews of Hermon,
And the blessing promised for evermore:

Was thinking how sure is the firm foundation
Of the hills that are round about us here,
And God says that as sure is His great salvation,
And the blessing which does not die with the year.

Then a breath of the Autumn wind passed, sighing,
And pushing aside the heavy church door;
I saw it had left a dead leaf lying
On our Gracie's grave in the chancel floor.

Only last Spring! I so well remember
Her quiet smile and the kiss I gave;
It was April then—and it's now November,
And the withered leaf lies on Gracie's grave.

When Christmas comes we shall feel so lonely:—
She was our Christmas gift one year:
I long for her often and often;—only
Heaven is better than being here.

"We all do fade as a leaf" was engraven
On the marble stone under which she lies;
But she is a beautiful flower in Heaven—
Our baby Grace with the happy eyes.

Books say that the life we live every minute
Is like the year as it travels past—
Spring, and Summer, and Autumn in it,
And—"we all do fade as a leaf"—at last.

I suppose that *my* fading will happen one day
(Though things in books are not always true);
And I was wishing in church on Sunday
For the promised blessing which falls as dew.

For spring-time and sowing should come together;
I may be having a seed-time now;
Scattering grains which in harvest weather
Into some blossoming ears may grow.

A child's hand, even, can plant a daisy ;
And the dew falls even where daisies grow :
I always long, when I think of Gracie,
To be doing something for Jesus now :

For Jesus Christ whom she sees in Heaven,
Who took her tenderly while she smiled ;
For Him in whose name we have been forgiven,
Who knew what it was to be a child.

I should like, in the day when the angel-reapers
Shall gather the children their Lord to greet,
And shall gently awaken the quiet sleepers,
To lay some gift at the Master's feet.

Some little efforts and offerings lowly
I even now unto Him may bring,
His love in taking them makes them holy—
He would not like me to waste my Spring.

. . . . . .

Backwards and forwards—slower and slower—
I hear the pattering drops begin :
The clouds have been falling lower and lower ;
I think it is time to be going in !

November.

"THE winter is coming!" the children cry,
And are thinking of frozen fingers:
"Only here and there do the red leaves lie
While the beautiful autumn lingers;
The days are growing so short and drear,
And it's cold getting up in the morning:
We wish that the summer were always here,
Our gardens and fields adorning!"

The wind passes over the field forlorn
And sighs out its tale of trouble:
"I once was a field of golden corn,
And now I'm a field of stubble!"
The birds have flown to the sunny South,
And the Robin is grave and steady,
As if not caring to open his mouth
Till his Christmas songs are ready.

Cheer up, children! behind the bars
The fire glows in the twilight;
A few more weeks, and the Christmas stars
Will be winking down through the skylight:
There's a message for all of us,—you and me,
In this brown and gray November;
There's work for which we must all agree
Ere the twenty-fifth of December.

See, bright are the garlands November weaves,
For the year so quickly dying;
Let us gather up crimson and golden leaves
Which here on the ground are lying:
Let us gather up many an earnest thought
Which we had when the year was younger;
Shall we let them wither and come to nought,
Or, living them, make them stronger,

And wreathe them now in the autumn drear,
My little sisters and brothers,
Into deeds which shall gladden the fading year,
Into gentle care for others?
There are many whose sorrows our love may lighten,
The lonely, the sad, the weary;
And those who for others the way would brighten
Will not find the winter dreary.

Christmas.

ECHO forth the Christmas carol,
Now the holly garland weave;
Deck the church with green apparel,
In the light of Christmas Eve.
For Christmas comes with a song,
And with words of holy cheer;
With children's laughter in happy throng,
And with hopes for a glad New Year!

Brighten, with the Christmas greeting,
Eyes through pain and weeping dim:
To the sad in heart repeating
Echoes of the angels' hymn.
For their Christmas comes with a sigh,
And with thoughts of other times;
And many a dream of the past floats by
With the sound of the midnight chimes.

Think of those who still are ours,
Though in regions far away;
Sunny skies and starry flowers
They would give for *home* to-day:
For their Christmas comes where they roam
With a thought of over the sea;
And with tender dreams of the friends at home,
And a soft—"Will they think of *me?*"

Now, while friend with friend is meeting,
While the glistering boughs they wreathe,
Send I forth for thee my greeting,—
Loving prayers for thee I breathe:
May thy Christmas come with a song,
With the light of the Christmas Star;
May visions bright o'er thy pathway throng,
And joys from a Land afar!
Such hopes for thee I weave,
While the bells chime full and clear;
And oh, may the light of thy Christmas Eve
Shine soft o'er a glad New Year!

Waiting for the Answer.

(NOT WHOLLY AN IMAGINATION.)

THE Year had joined hands with stern Winter at parting,
Only feeling the grasp of his fingers still;
The jubilant Earth, from his fetters upstarting,
Wore buds in the valley, and lights on the hill.

Tremulous airs, prophetic with cadence,
Thrill'd forth the promise of joys to come;
Breathing soft round the glad little holiday maidens
Who in greenwood and copse discerned Spring in the loom.

High up to heaven the clear morning hymn rose,
As we claimed treasure-trove from each low-leaved nest,—
Here a first violet, there a shy primrose,—
And held up our trophies with "Mine's the best!"

I can remember the sheltered hollow,—
I called it my arbour—half up the hill;
And the hidden path which I loved to follow,
I knew it so well I could find it still.

I had reached it alone;—the red cliffs were under,
The blue waves dreamily murmuring;
And I was wond'ring as children wonder
At the marvellous miracle-play of Spring.

I said, "Does God, who is always holding
This breathing Earth in His mighty hand,
Himself stoop to care for each blossom unfolding,
As He weaves out the greenness thro' all the land?

"Or do flow'rs come forth, and the feathery grasses,
And every lovely and beautiful thing,
When high up in heav'n the Royal Act passes,
And God says mightily, 'Let there be Spring!'"

I heard some one talk, till my brain grew weary,
Of His glorious will as "a Great First Cause;"
And in words which to me sounded cold and dreary,
Of "Nature's outworking of stern fixed laws."

But I like to think that He loves each flow'r;
That He paints the soft tendrils of every leaf;
That He plans the downfall of every show'r,
To each stem athirst that He sends relief.

He knows the fowls on the forest mountains,
On a thousand hills are His cattle fed;
And He tells us how waters of springs and fountains
To the desolate wilderness herbs are led.

And yet—oh, it sometimes seems very hard,
Yes, very hard to be understood
Why He lets His beautiful works be marr'd,
Which we know He makes perfect and "very good."

The angry gale and the storm-wind rushing,
Destroy full many a flowery wreath;
Last week a whole pile of the cliff fell, crushing
The fast-budding chestnuts which grew beneath.

When the blossom is out in our orchard-meadows,
  Like a rose-tinted veil all over the land,
The east-wind comes up with its blighting shadows,
  As if some bad fairy had waved his wand.

If our Father knows of each sparrow falling,
  Why do the young ones so often fall?
Since He hears the voice of His creatures calling,
  Why sometimes in vain do they seem to call?

Is it wrong? is it right? to have thoughts like these,
  When God is so good, and His world so fair;
With the bay gleaming bright thro' these low-branching trees,
  On this happy spring day, in this glad spring air?

There are so many things that I want to be learning,
  So many questionings go and come;
These thoughts which are ever and aye returning
  I shall take to our father when we go home.

I think that he knows almost everything;
  And has read all the books on the study shelves;
And hard questions which sometimes to him we bring
  He helps us to find out all by ourselves.

They are calling! yes, yes, I have flowers to gather,—
  "I am here! don't you see me? I'll come! I'll come!"
Spring flowers for mother; questions for father;
  Head full and hands full for going home!

. . . . . .

He scarcely saw me when first I entered,
And stole with white violets into the room;
On some vellumed folio his thoughts were centred,
Till he looked up, breathing the sweet perfume.

And I said, "These are letters for you, dear father!
They are sent by the spring-time from under the trees;
And some questions came with them, hard questions, rather,
May the postman wait for the answer, please?"

I knew I might stay, when he laid down his book,
The black-lettered page, with its margin wide;
And the low brown stool from the hearth I took,
And told out my tale, nestling close to his side.

And he threw his arm round his little daughter,
And I felt his hand as he stroked my hair,
While we both looked forth to where, over the water,
Our Devonshire hills stood out green and fair.

And I knew that away his thoughts had travelled,
Until, after a time, he looked down and smil'd,
Saying softly, "The skein is not here unravelled:
I cannot answer you now, dear child.

"These are only the fringings of deeper wond'rings,
Which have baffled heads wiser by far than mine;
Infinite problems, and mighty pond'rings,
Concerning the ways and the plans Divine."

And then he went on,—not, I felt, recollecting
His hearer, who followed with grave surprise;
For I listened wond'ring, not half suspecting
That for questions of mine would come words so wise:—

"Inscrutable problems of sin and sorrow,
God's grand 'very good' by their discords jarr'd;
To-day's hopes crushed by a harsh to-morrow,
To *our* eyes, His plans and His workings marr'd;

"And above the floods, Love and Pow'r conceiving
Their fusion into eternity's plan;
From sin and from sorrow one Hand outweaving
Glory to God and goodwill towards man.

"When our eyes shall behold Him, the Ancient of Days.
The work will be ended; peace wrought out of strife;
And, in grand vindication of fathomless ways,
Out of death, resurrection,—unchangeable life."

Then to me he said, "As my child grows older,
And looks round on a world of want and care,
May her Father in heav'n with love enfold her,
And keep her near Him in faith and pray'r!

"There is much that we here cannot understand;
His dealings and plans are not ours to know;
But no thread ever falls from His mighty hand:
We but see the reverse of the pattern now.

"Our sword and our shield must be kept from rusting;
And tho' many hard questions our faith may prove,
We must trust our Father to keep us trusting,
And answer all doubtings with 'God is love!'

"He Himself is our surety: His Son was giv'n
To redeem this fair earth from its lost estate;
But till all is made clear in the sunlight of heav'n,
My child and her father must learn to wait."

. . . . . .

Many a year has pass'd away
Since our flower-exploits on that green hill-side;
But the vision still lives of that fair spring day,
And the childish ponderings have not died.

In the orphan'd home, by the vacant chair,
In the want and the woe which Christ's messengers meet,
In what seem to us times of unanswered prayer,
In the rush and the throng of the city street;

When the causes of right and of truth seem lost,
When sin is triumphant, and wrong unredrest,
When by grey disappointment life efforts are cross't,
When the many are needing, the few finding, rest;

When the labourer fails, and his work, forsaken,
Is exchanged for long days and lone nights of pain,
Though faith be unclouded and trust unshaken,
The old, old questions return again;

And for me gleam once more the clear lights thro' the
wild wood;
To my ear the low ripplings of blue waves come;
And I answer my thoughts with the thought of my
childhood,
"My Father will tell me when I go Home."

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